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COMPUTER GAMES™

DECEMBER/JANUARY 1984

HOT GAME NEWS!
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WHICH COMPUTER PLAYS GAMES BEST?

WE RATE APPLE, ATARI, AND COMMODORE

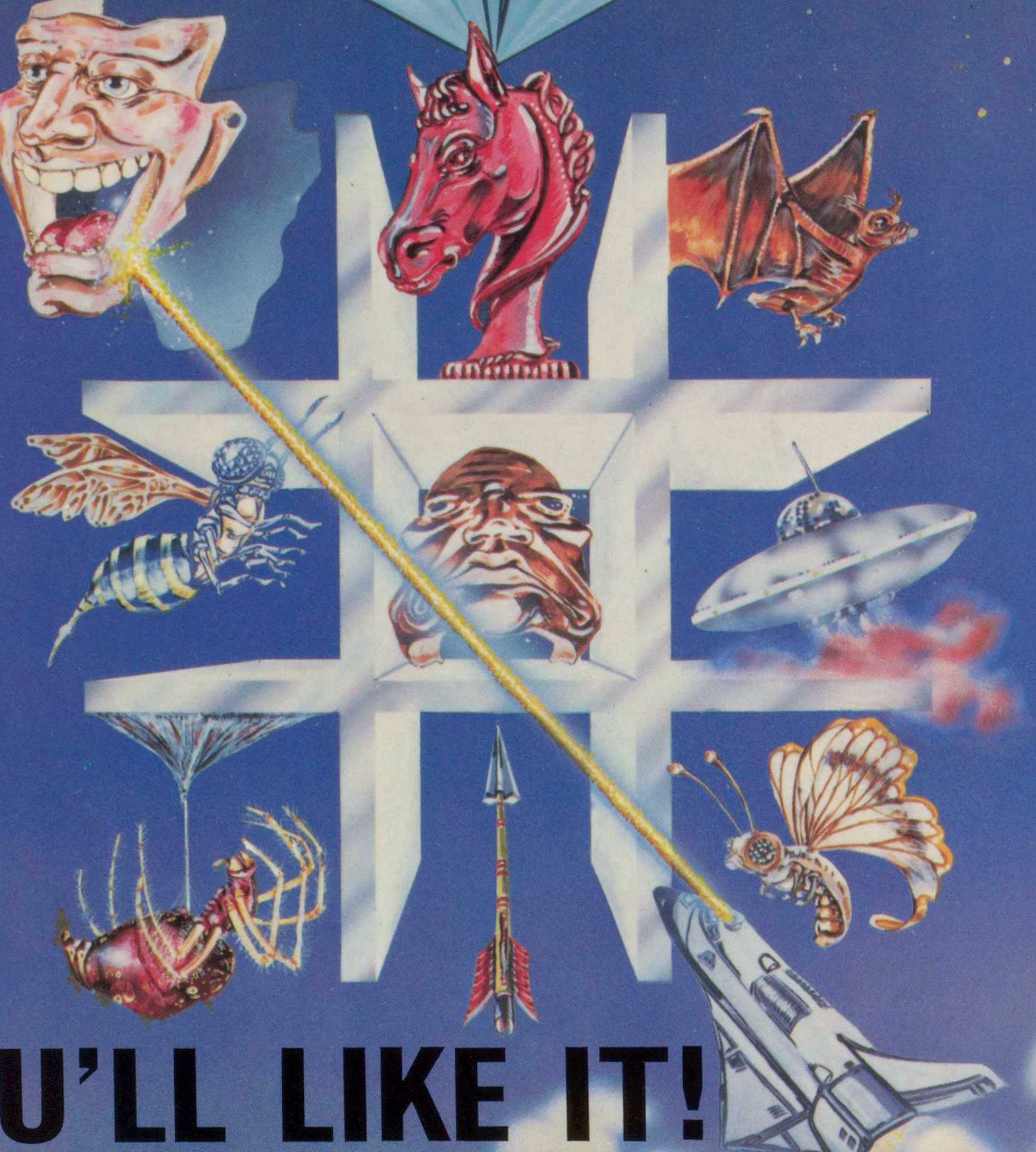
VIDEO GAME SUPERSTARS

HOW THEY TURN HIGH SCORES INTO BIG BUCKS

BEAT 'EM!

- *STAR WARS*
- *CONGO BONGO*
- *XEVIOUS*
- *TIME PILOT*

TRIAD



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Here's why! TRIAD is nine separate pulse-pounding games in one package. Select one of nine weird alien menaces to battle from the Master Board. But careful — these guys can be tricky! Defeat three aliens in a row tic-tac-toe style and you earn a crack at the next skill level.

The whole neighborhood'll thrill to TRIAD's crisp colors, super sounds and the oddest assortment of alien "baddies" ever assembled on one screen. Snappy arcade excitement for all ages!

TRIAD — from Adventure International. Why get one game when you can have nine?

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TRS-80 CoCo 32K TAPE $34.95

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Adventure®
INTERNATIONAL
A DIVISION OF SCOTT ADAMS, INC.

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INTRODUCING

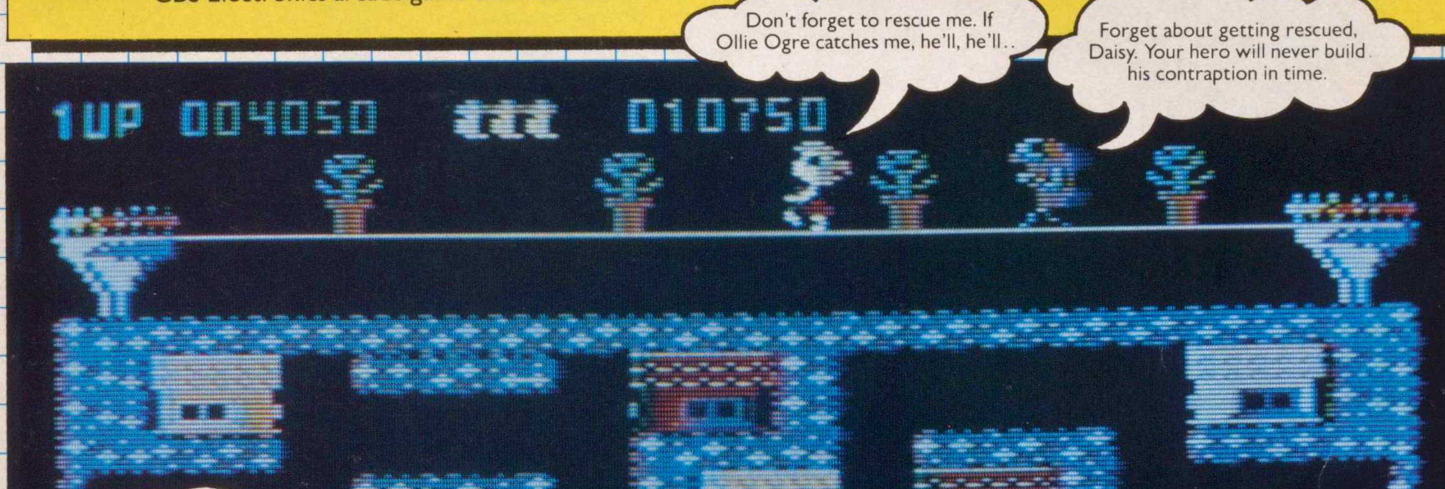
BLUEPRINT*™

The Bally/Midway™ arcade memory-twister you can play at home.

Remember playing BLUEPRINT in the arcades? How it drove you nuts? The damsel in distress? The crazy contraption? Fuzzy Wuzzy? Ollie Ogre? The bomb pit? The explosions on the way to the bomb pit? You forgot all that?!!

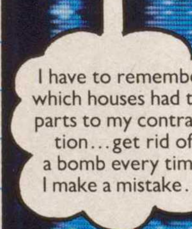
Well, our new BLUEPRINT didn't forget a thing. It's just as nutty at home as in the arcades, whether you play it on your Atari® 2600,™ 5200,™ 400/800/1200XL™ or Mattel Intellivision.®

See for yourself. And don't forget to remember not to forget to send in the coupon for up to $20.00 in CBS Electronics arcade game cash rebates!


Don't forget to rescue me. If Ollie Ogre catches me, he'll, he'll..
Forget about getting rescued, Daisy. Your hero will never build his contraption in time.
1UP 004050
010750
Says you, Ollie!...
I have to remember which houses had the parts to my contraption... get rid of a bomb every time I make a mistake...
stay out of the clutches of my arch-rival Fuzzy Wuzzy...
and put my contraption together in exactly the right order. Now you'll pay for chasing my girlfriend, creep!
START
THE BLUEPRINT
MONSTER
FASTRUNTIME
PIT

Shown on Atari® 5200™

DON'T FORGET YOUR CASH REBATE COUPON. GET UP TO $20


For the ATARI 2600
BLUE PRINT
CBS Electronics

We'll mail you $5.00 with each purchase of any of these CBS Electronics games: BLUEPRINT,™ SOLAR FOX,™ GORF,™ WIZARD OF WOR.™

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Cash Rebate, P.O. Box 778 Green Farms, CT 06436

3. To qualify for the cash rebate by mail, all of the above items must be sent in their original form. No reproductions will be accepted.

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7. Allow eight to ten weeks for receipt of rebate.

8. Offer subject to availability of CBS Electronics cartridges and good only while supplies last. No rainchecks or other price/product guarantees made by retailers will be honored.

Limit one $5.00 rebate for each cartridge purchased up to $20.00. This certificate must be accompanied by your *cash register receipt and the UPC symbol* found on the back of the cartridge box. This offer expires Oct. 15, 1983. All requests must be received by Nov. 1, 1983.

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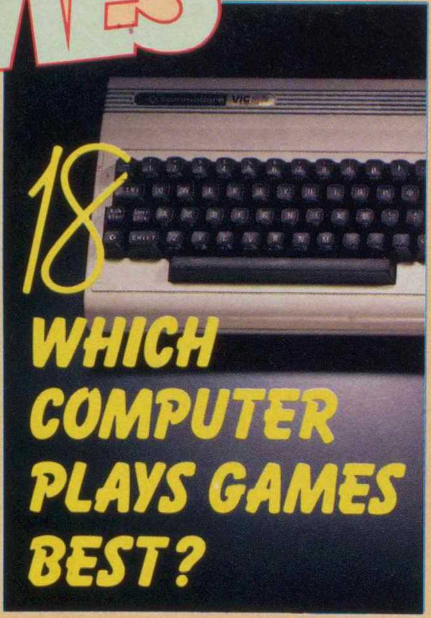

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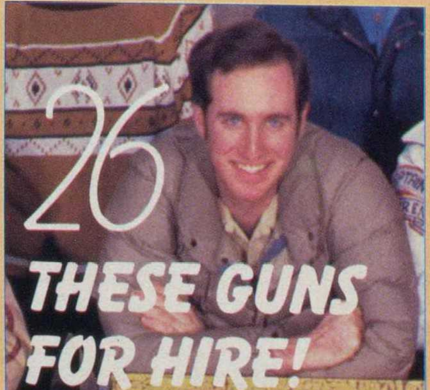

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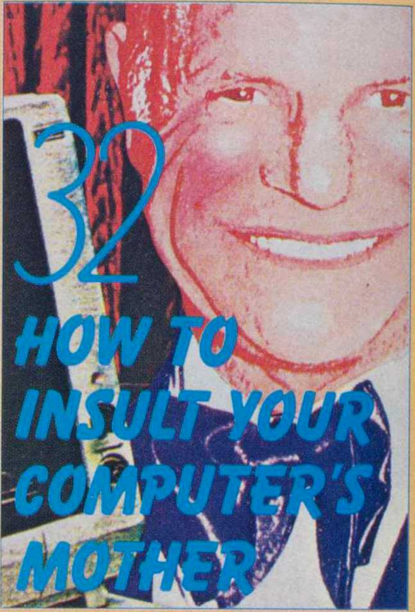

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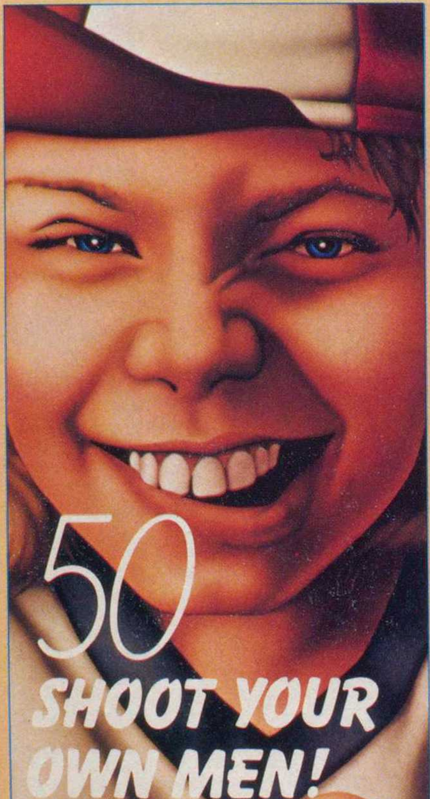

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NAME GAMES

I saw in your last issue that you've sold out to Silicon Valley and are changing *VGP* to *Computer Games*. Does this mean you won't cover video games anymore? What about coin-ops? Will I have to buy a computer just to keep up?

Noel Moore

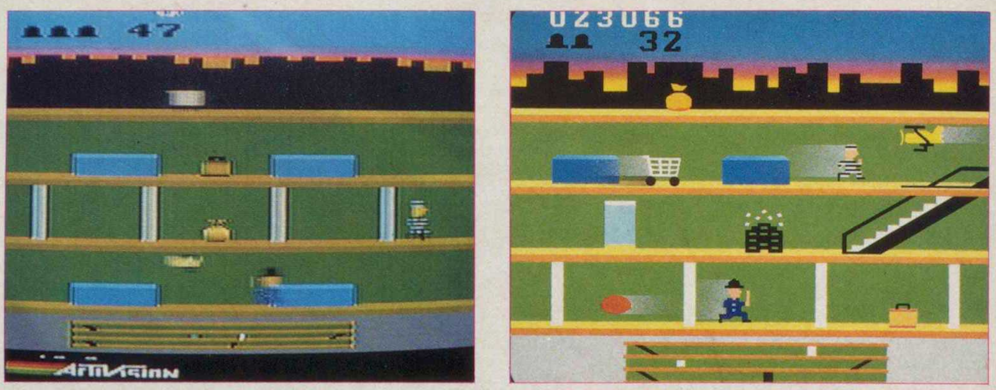
We feel that video games and computer games are really one field. Have you ever seen Defender *on both Atari 5200 and Atari 400/800? Identical. We have always covered games played on computers and games played on video game systems. The title change and expanded computer game coverage were made to introduce our magazine to computer owners who may have overlooked it as* Video Games Player. *We will still cover arcade games and games for Atari VCS, 5200, ColecoVision, Intellivision, and Odyssey^2. No, you don't have to buy a computer. Maybe you'll* win *one later in this issue.*

WHO'S ON THIRD?

In your Fall 1982 issue, you sponsored a contest in which the prize was a year's worth of quarters for coming up with the best idea for a video game. I entered, but never saw another issue until now. Did I miss a few issues, or what? Please tell me who won, and where to get the back issues I missed.

Dave Loesch

Christopher Clary, a 14-year-old from Hamlin, New York, won the quarters for a game called Athenia. *And no, you didn't miss a thing. We've only published two issues to date. But we're bi-monthly now, so watch out.*



Activision's Keystone Kapers. It's pretty clear which screen was supplied by the company and which screen we shot off our own TV set. Don't assume the game will look like the "picture" of the game.

SCREENS 'R' US

Why do photographs of game screens in all the other game magazines look the same, but yours are different? Why do they look clearer than yours?

Tommy Burns

Whoops, forgot to take off the lens cap! Actually, the manufacturers send around those screens of their games to all the magazines. But we don't like to use them because we noticed that very often the supplied screens look better than the games themselves. In fact, some of them are obvious illustrations, not photos. For that reason, we shoot almost all of our game screens ourselves.

TOP SCORES?

I'd like to know the high scores for these arcade games: *Bosconian, Donkey Kong Jr., Kangaroo* and *Frogger.*

Robert McLure

Bosconian: *2,913,510.* Donkey Kong Jr.: *957,300.* Kangaroo: *921,800.* Frogger: *442,330. (Thanks to the Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard, 226 E. Main St., Ottumwa, Iowa 52556.)*

MINIMUM WHAT?

What's the meaning of the "minimum score potential" listed for each game in the *Beat It!* column?

Sonny Brinson

Glad you asked. This is the minimum score you should expect to get if you follow exactly *the column's advice (although we cannot be held responsible if you don't make it, natch).*

Q*BERT SPEAKS!

Here's what I think *Q*Bert* was saying in the cartoon in your last issue: "That's the last !!##%?!?!??#@!! time I try to play Frisbee with Arnold Schwarzenegger!!" If this wins me the $15 prize, I'd rather have a year's subscription to your great magazine.

Oh yeah, a few months ago I joined the ColecoVision Club. I sent them $6 but haven't heard from them since. Know what's going on?

Jeff Silva

We called the club and they said, "Your membership application has been processed and you'll be receiving your club kit shortly. The response to the club has been so overwhelming that it has taken longer than expected to produce everything." Sorry, you didn't win.

GAME PLANS

Is Sega planning to make their games—like *Congo Bongo*—available for ColecoVision? And what's Sega's address?

Bruce Glen

Will Coleco make *Lady Bug* for the Atari VCS? If so, when?

James McDonald

Congo Bongo, Star Trek *and* Buck Rogers/Zoom *will soon be out for Atari's VCS, 5200, all its home computers, the VIC-20, TI-99/4A, and Intellivision I and II. No word from Sega on Coleco, though. (Write them at Sega, 5555 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038.) And Coleco has no plans to make* Lady Bug *for the VCS.*

Got a question? Got a gripe? Just want half a million people to see your name in print? Punch your initials in here, and write: Letters to the Editor, Computer Games, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106.

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the Arctic.

This Ice Is Not Nice.

It's slippery and moving fast. No place to play hopscotch, but if Frostbite Bailey™ wants an igloo, he'd better hop to it. With every bounce, his ice-house grows. That is, if he doesn't fall in.

The Zero Factor.

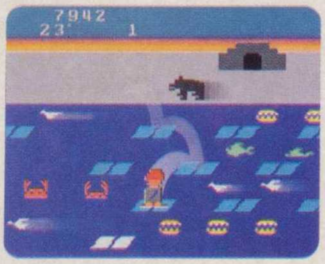
Construction starts at a balmy 45° above — and dropping. Frostbite has to finish work and be inside before it hits zero, or he becomes a polar popsicle.

Foes In The Floes.

Perils surround this Arctic architect. King crabs, killer clams and snow geese, all ready to help him take a dive. And lurking at the front door of his Klondike Condo — a ferocious grizzly polar bear.

Will Frostbite Bailey Be Home Free?

Probably not. It's like we told you. Life is no picnic at the North Pole. Come see if you're hot enough to handle Frostbite.™



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FROSTBITE
VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE FOR THE
ATARI 2600 VIDEO COMPUTER SYSTEM

A chillingly clever design by Steve Cartwright for your Atari® 2600.™

FROSTBITE™

ACTIVISION®
We put you in the game.

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Thumb Action Is Done... The Trigger Era Has Begun!

TRIGA ELITE

Triga-Elite—The ultimate video game weapon. The finest controller features available. The full 5 year guarantee is only the beginning.

- 8 position sensitivity setting for handle pivot response. From almost a 0° to 10° response range.
- Built in rapid fire bar with instantaneous activation.
- Independent second action fire button for the latest games.
- Fully adjustable trigger sensitivity.
- Patent pending design.
- Removable dual sided suction cups.
- Full 5 year no-nonsense guarantee!

TRIGA COMMAND

Triga-Command, the original trigger activated joystick that brought total control and comfort to video game playing.

- Helicopter style control handle.
- Index finger trigger action.
- Removable dual sided suction cups.
- Diamond cut textured grip.
- 30 day factory money back guarantee.

NEW! ATARI 5200 JOYSTICK INTERFACE
Allows 5200 owners to use any 9 pin joysticks on the Supersystem.
Greatly improves scores and response time.

All Triga joysticks function on:
ColecoVision, Coleco-Gemini, Atari 2600 and Atari Computers, Commodore Computers, Sears Telegames, and others.

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FIRST NEWS WAVE

HOT GOSSIP

Milton Bradley has sued **Atari** for 23 million dollars, claiming that Atari cancelled its order for voice recognition modules for their VCS and 5200 game systems .... Type **QQQQQQQQQQQPT** on **Odyssey's Type 'N' Tell** and it sounds like a person brushing his teeth . . . On **Cleveland's** Channel 61, they have a show called **Video Arcade**, in which you call up and yell **''POW!''** into the phone, controlling the game on the screen . . . **Amiga**, makers of the **Joyboard**, are about to release a new computer . . . **Datamost** is coming out with a 3-D Apple version of **Aztec . . . Coleco** is planning to produce games for competing computers . . . **Fox** has sliced the price of their **M*A*S*H** game in half, calling this a "unique marketing move." **Right** . . . Filmmaker **Daniel Risdon** has filed a $14 million damage suit against **Disney** for ripping off his script, **''Megalopolis, The Computer City,''** and making it into **Tron . . . Clive ''Timex'' Sinclair** has put in a bid on **John DeLorean's** sports car factory in **Belfast . . . Dig Dug** in **Hebrew** means "grammar" if you are interested . . . **Safeware** is a new insurance plan for owners of computers. Write to *CNGA, 88 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43215* . . . Has anybody noticed that the highly-touted **''mouse''** is just a **trackball** turned upside down? . . . **Electronic Arts** is taking **Activision** one step further—they publicize their designers more than the games. **M.U.L.E** designers are all from **Arkansas** . . . After vacuum tubes, transistors, and integrated circuits, what comes next? **''Quiterons,''** according to **Science Digest**. These tiny chips will use **one-hundredth** as much power as today's most advanced circuits . . . **Atari** plans to introduce a laserdisc home video game. They will also scrap **My First Computer**, the plug-in keyboard for the VCS . . . **Magnavox** is introducing a nifty **laser phonograph**. Perhaps their **Odyssey** branch will stun the field with laser games? . . . **Nolan Bushnell** is producing a TV show of video game previews. You should also check out **The New Tech Times**, a PBS show . . . **Gottlieb (Q*Bert, Mad Planets)** is changing its name—to **Mylstar**. Why? . . . Expect to start seeing cheapo $5 quickie game carts hitting the market like the $1.99 records . . . **Avalon Hill** has a new game with the weird title of **S.C.I.M.M.A.R.'S**. It stands for *Surface Contra-Gravity Individual Manned Mobile Anti-Vehicle Raiders* . . . **Atari**'s new **Robotron** will require manipulating both joysticks at once, like the arcade game . . . A company called **Environmental Fragrance Technologies** is coming out with something called **Aroma Discs**. Yes, records that **smell!** . . . A few questions for the video game companies. **Sega:** If you are now making home games, why did you license **Pengo** to **Atari**? **Atari:** How come we can be at the pole position in **Pole Position** and still have cars to pass right away? **Coleco:** Whatever happened to **Pepper I**? **Ottumwa**, Iowa, the "Video Game Capital of the World," is starting a **Video Game Hall of Fame**. Several manufacturers have donated artifacts . . . About one out of three **ColecoVision** owners buys the expansion module to play **Atari VCS** carts . . . **Crown Prince Henri** of **Luxembourg** brought a **Millipede** home with him after his recent trip here . . . Book publishers, such as **Random House**, are rushing to enter the computer software business . . . **Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Jr., Mario, Luigi**, and **Pauline** are stars of a new Saturday morning TV show, **Saturday Supercade** . . . Folks, if your cartridges are a little dirty and don't play, try rubbing a pencil eraser over the contact points . . .

See you next time!

At last! Robotron will be here for Christmas. Below, a sign at the last Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. At the bottom is Bill Bunten, Jim Rushing, Alan Watson, and Dan Bunten, designers of M.U.L.E. for Electronic Arts. When they need ideas, they go fishing.

ROBOTRON
2084
ATARI
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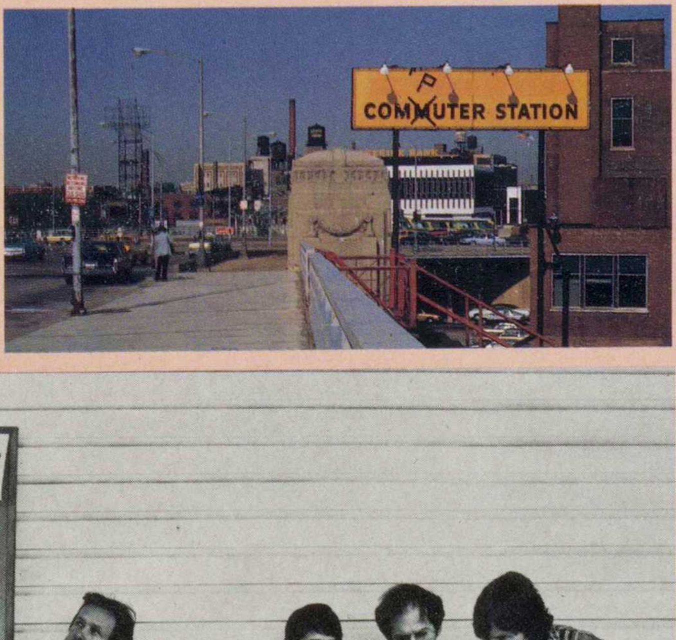
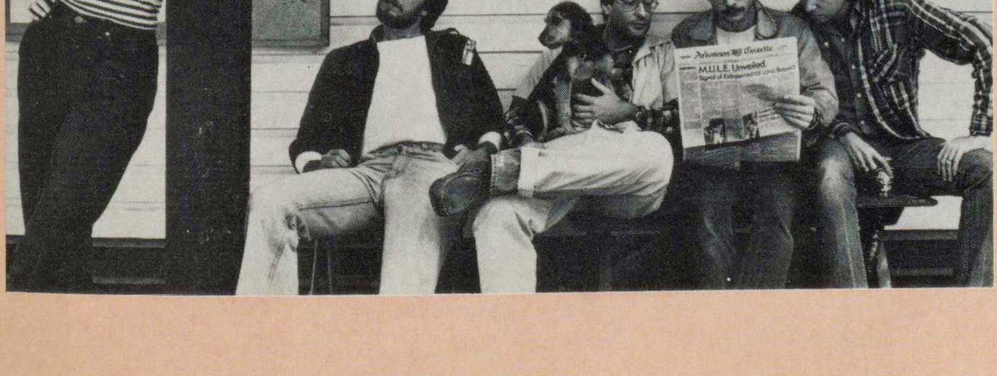
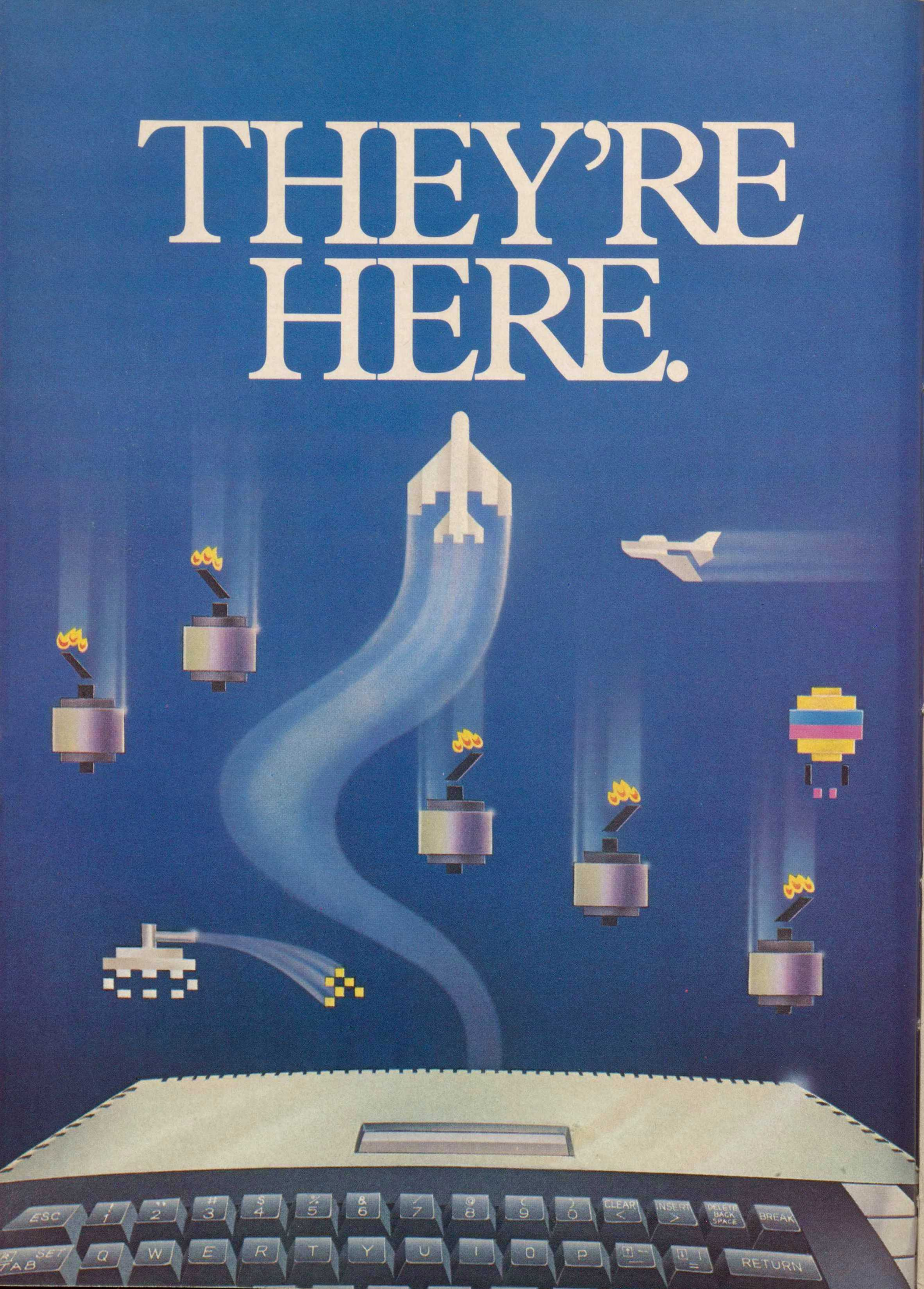




Clue #1: Anthony played this arcade game in Twilight Zone movie


THEY'RE HERE.
ESC
CLEAR
INSERT
DELETE BACK SPACE
BREAK
TAB
SET
Q W E R T Y U I O P
RETURN

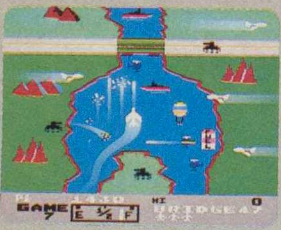
River Raid™ and Kaboom!® are here. And your Atari® home computer just became more fun than ever.

Because River Raid and Kaboom! have been re-designed to take full advantage of home computer capabilities.

Far beyond anything you've ever experienced before in video games.

Unique graphics, crisp detail and brilliant sound all come together with spectacular impact.

River Raid,™ the battle adventure up the "River of No Return."



The realism of Carol Shaw's River Raid is utterly amazing.

It challenges your reflexes, stamina and strategic savvy as you battle your way up the winding river.

Enemy choppers. Jets. Tanks. Hot-air balloons. Ships. All out to blow you to smithereens.

But you strike back.

Keeping one eye on the ever-changing terrain.

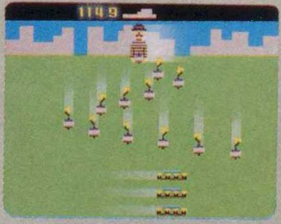
Bridges. Mountains. Canyon walls. Islands.

One false move and it's curtains.

And if you're up to it, now you can skip easier sections of the river and get right to the heart of the battle.

Everything that made River Raid such a smashing hit is here. And tons more.

Kaboom!®, the award-winning game of catch with buckets and bombs.



Larry Kaplan's Mad Bomber is back. The buckets are back.

But now, in Paul Willson's adaptation, you can drop the bombs, while someone else tries to catch them.

Imagine dropping bombs. Faster and faster.

To the ever-quickening pace of the 1812 Overture.

You shift right. Left. Back again. All the way right.

He misses! You win!

Now it's your turn to catch. The pressure mounts.

The bombs start flying. You dash to catch them.

And so it goes on into the night.

And everytime you hit a new high score, it's displayed after the game, just like at the arcade.

Kaboom! and River Raid for your Atari home computer.

They're here.

Just for the fun of it.

CAROL SHAW'S
RIVER RAID
KABOOM!

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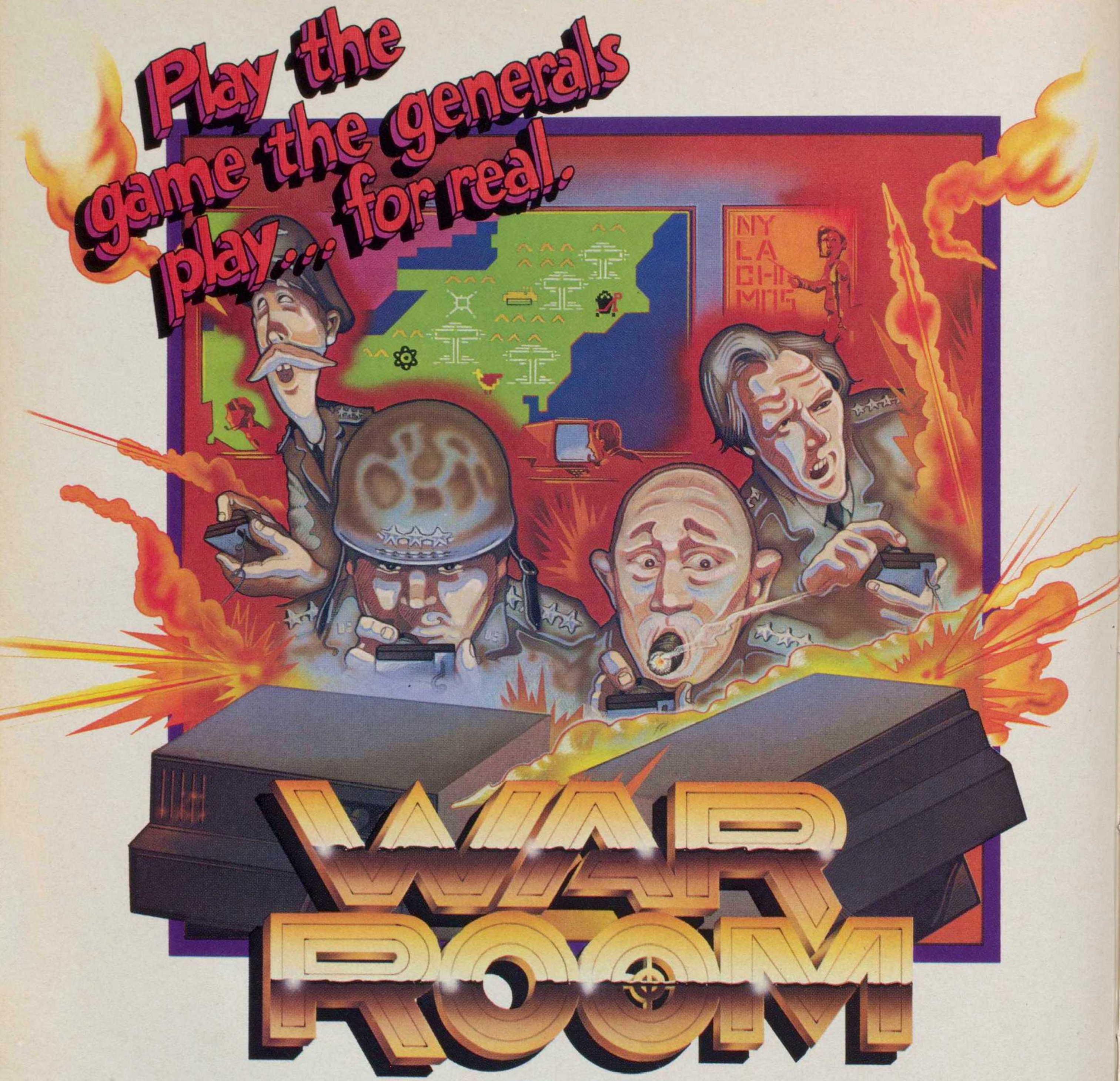
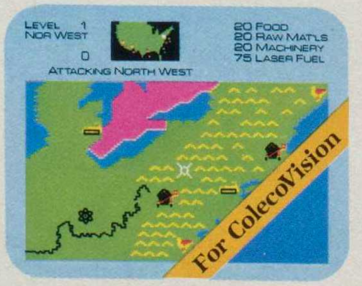

Play the game the generals play... for real.
NY
LA
CHI
MOS
WAR ROOM


LEVEL 1
NOR WEST
0
ATTACKING NORTH WEST
20 FOOD
20 RAW MAT'LS
20 MACHINERY
75 LASER FUEL
For ColecoVision

Feel the goose bumps on your neck begin to rise as you take your seat in front of the video monitor. The situation pictured before your eyes is critical. Actual enemy nuclear attack on your most important cities and natural resources has begun.

Only *you* can determine the best strategic defense of the nation. Only *you* can effectively repel the enemy attack.

But the situation worsens. As you're attempting to rebuild your cities and keep production of goods and services going, you pick up enemy spies lurking within your midst on your video close-up monitor. Can you effectively deal with them... even as more enemy missiles are approaching?

Your time is running out.

It's WAR ROOM. The new high-technology Probe 2000 strategy game for the ColecoVision™ game system. The game that's so realistic, generals might even play it.

Isn't it time you tested your skills?

PROBE 2000
series

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The Video Game Gazette

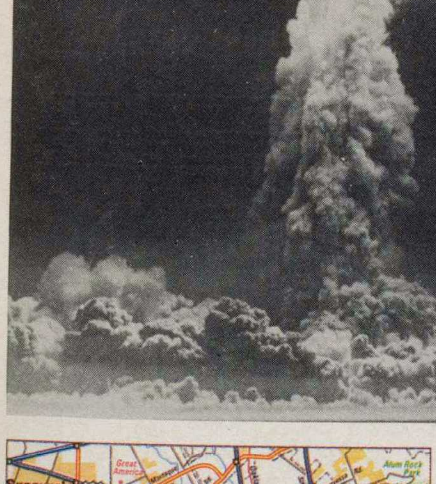
ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PLAY

ATARI HAS THE BOMB!

SUNNYVALE—Informed sources inside Atari have revealed to the *Gazette* that the top secret "Falcon Project" was actually a plan to develop nuclear weapons, and that at least three of the video game companies now have nuclear capability. The plan, according to our source, was a response to increased competition in the video game field. "Why bother with price wars and lawsuits," he said, "when you can just blow Coleco and Mattel off the face of the earth?" Secret maps showing alternative nuclear targets in and around Silicon Valley have been uncovered at Atari's headquarters. These show that at least three other video game and computer game companies were targeted for destruction. Atari itself has moved much of its manufacturing to Taiwan for defensive purposes.

Atari's bomb is a slight variation on the neutron bomb—this one wipes out all people and buildings, but leaves TV sets standing. According to a company higher-up, they were set to use the bomb on various Silicon Valley companies until it was discovered that Mattel has developed a second-generation bomb—called "Neutron-Maze-A-Tron Bomb," which wipes out everything except for George Plimpton. A total balance of power was achieved when Coleco announced at a press conference that their Adam Bomb, available in March, will not only destroy civilization as we know it, but will come with a letter-quality printer as well.

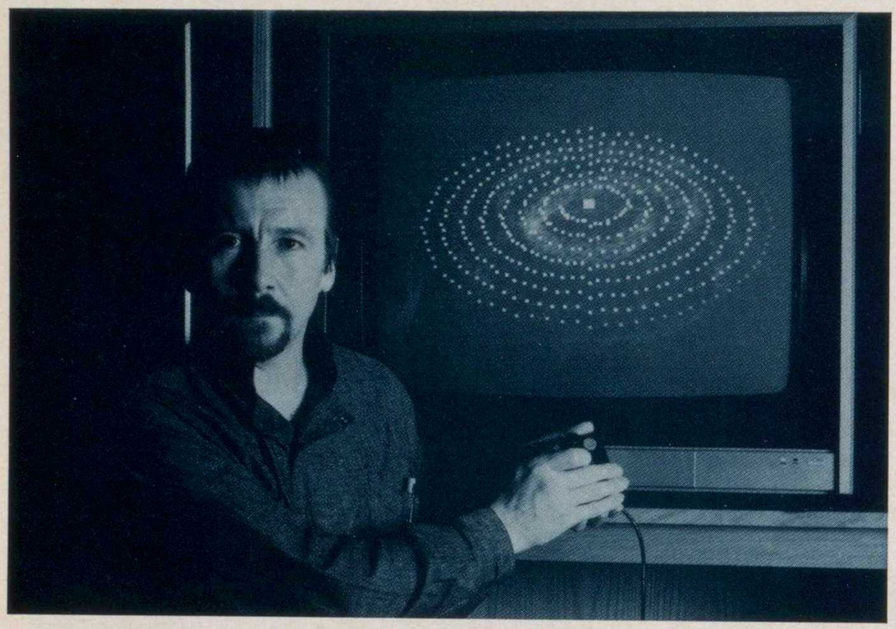
"Since no one video game company has first strike capability, the world is safe, for the time being, from nuclear war," declared Atari spokesman Alan Alda, "But just in case, I am pleased to announce that Atari has acquired the license of World War III for all video and computer games."



"War is swell," said Mattel, until Atari bombed them back to the Stone Age. Left: Top-secret map shows more Silicon Valley targets. Alan "Blood 'n' Guts" Alda now heads up Atari's "Battlezone" Battalion.

The Video Game Gazette

BIRTH.....LIFE.....DEATH.....RESET



Try this game concept on for size—"Your objective is to become interesting to the inhabitants and eventually become accepted into a conversation." That's one of five sequences in Roklan's *Lifespan,* billed as "the first video game produced as a work of art." The artist is John E. O'Neill, who art directed Atari's *E.T. Phone Home.* In *Lifespan* you earn no points and there is nothing to kill. It is a model of life from birth to death and you've got to live as full a life as possible despite the Worries, Fears, and Doubts which try to knock away pieces of your character.

Who says there are no completely original games? *Lifespan* is available for Apple and Atari computers.

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PAC VAN
ARCADE-ON-WHEELS
(301) 493-9066

EXACT CHANGE ONLY?

MARYLAND—Bette DeYoung is the Good Humor Woman of the 1980s. When she rolls her "Pac-Van" down the streets of Bethesda, the kids come running. Pac-Van is a converted school bus with ten arcade games on it—*Galaga, Centipede, Turbo, Stargate, Eagle, Gorf, Donkey Kong Junior, Blue Print,* and two *Ms. Pac-Mans.* Outfitted with its own generator, it holds 40 kids and Bette will rent it for parties at $90 per hour. "My whole life is in the bus," she says. Now Bette is buying another one to patrol Baltimore.

Hooray! Italy has its own video game magazine. For information, write to: Video Giochi, c/o VIT, Via Guido D'Arezzo, 19, 20145 Milano, Italy.

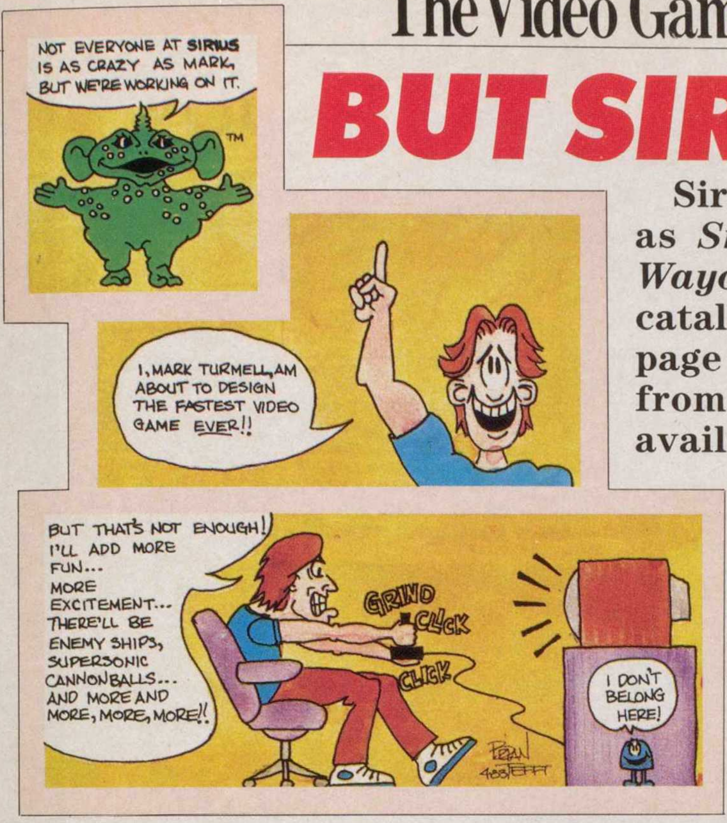
VIDEO GAMES BLAMED IN DOUBLE KILLING

NEW YORK—*The murders of two elderly women were blamed on "Pac-Man Syndrome" by a Manhattan Supreme Court Justice recently. According to* The New York Post, *the judge told convicted killer Ivan Mendoza, "You are a fantasy boy. You are in a* Pac-Man *syndrome, and from* Pac-Man *we suddenly see the Atrocity Boy." The judge apparently came to this conclusion when it was discovered that Mendoza, 17, spent the $500 he stole from his victims on "camping equipment, video games and movies." Mendoza, in addition to killing the two women and raping his best friend's mother, also fantasized of "killing each juror one by one by strangling, hanging or by tearing out their eyes or ripping to shreds their throats or their groins."*

Well that proves it—another video game-related senseless killing. Why not blame the camping equipment?

OBITUARIES

Vidiot magazine and *Blip* magazine passed away recently, both due to natural causes. Services were held in private ceremonies and the deceased are survived by *Creem* and *Spiderman* respectively.


NOT EVERYONE AT SIRIUS IS AS CRAZY AS MARK, BUT WE'RE WORKING ON IT.
TM
I, MARK TURMELL, AM ABOUT TO DESIGN THE FASTEST VIDEO GAME EVER!!
BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH! I'LL ADD MORE FUN... MORE EXCITEMENT... THERE'LL BE ENEMY SHIPS, SUPERSONIC CANNONBALLS... AND MORE AND MORE, MORE, MORE!!
GRIND
CLICK
CLICK
I DON'T BELONG HERE!

BUT SIRIUSLY . . .

Sirius Software, maker of such hits as *Sneakers, Twerps, Bandits* and *Wayout,* is now printing their product catalog in the form of a very funny 20-page comic book. This is an excerpt from the page on *Turmoil,* which is available for Atari computers, VIC-20, and Commodore 64. The designer, Mark Turmell, now has a new shoot-'em-up called *Ozzie Ozone,* for the Commodore 64. (Editors note: Since we went to press, Mark Turmell is now an employee of Activision. It's a fast-moving business.)

8-YEAR-OLDS MAKE MILLION DOLLAR DECISIONS

NEW YORK—How do the game companies decide which games are good enough for release? The Children's Computer Workshop, marketing games through Atari and Radio Shack, brings in kids to help make the decisions. Here Katherine Esterman and her brother Isaac, 8, look over a game carefully to see if it rates.

VIDGAMES REACH NEW HEIGHTS

VANCOUVER—Space Invaders at 40,000 feet? Calm down, it's just the new in-flight video games on Canadian Pacific Airlines. Now on flights between Vancouver and Amsterdam, you can rent a portable video game set if you're sitting in the non-movie section of the plane. For $3.50 you can play Black Jack, Baseball, Boxing, Donkey Kong, Snoopy Tennis, *or* Mickey Mouse *for the entire nine-hour flight. The game set slides over the fold-out dinner trays. We hope the games are better than the food.*

FREE T-SHIRT!

WHO ARE YOU?

Now that we have introduced ourselves to you, it's time for you to introduce yourself to us. Who are you, anyway? We're going to ask you a bunch of questions so we can find out what you're like and what you'd like to see in Computer Games Player. As an added bonus, after you send us this survey, we'll send you a t-shirt, absolutely free, from CBS Electronics. Fair enough?

ABOUT YOU

1. What is your size?
Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large ☐

2. Are you: Male ☐ Female ☐ How old are you?______

3. What's your family income?
☐ Under $10,000
☐ $10,000 – 15,000
☐ $15,000 – 20,000
☐ $20,000 – 25,000
☐ More than $25,000

4. How many hours a week do you play computer games?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 4 hours ☐ 8 hours ☐ more ☐

5. How many hours a week do you play arcade video games?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 4 hours ☐ 8 hours ☐ more ☐

6. How many hours a week do you play home video games?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 4 hours ☐ 8 hours ☐ more ☐

7. How many video or computer game cartridges (or discs or tapes) do you own?
1 – 5 ☐ 5 – 10 ☐ 10 – 20 ☐ 20 – 30 ☐
30 – 40 ☐ more ☐

8. Which of the following products are in your home?
☐ Atari VCS
☐ Atari 5200
☐ ColecoVision
☐ Intellivision
☐ Odyssey
☐ Vectrex
☐ Accessory joystick
☐ Atari 400/800 computer
☐ Apple
☐ TRS-80
☐ Commodore VIC-20
☐ Commodore 64
☐ TI 99/4A
☐ IBM PC
☐ 35mm camera
☐ Video cassette recorder
☐ Stereo
☐ Video disc player

ABOUT COMPUTER GAMES

1. Why did you buy this magazine?
☐ The cover
☐ An article or feature
☐ I buy all the VG magazines
☐ A friend told me about it
☐ I liked the last issue

2. Where did you buy this magazine?
☐ Newsstand / magazine store
☐ Convenience store
☐ Supermarket
☐ Other__________

3. How much time did you spend reading this magazine?
1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 3 hours ☐ more ☐

4. How many people other than yourself looked at this copy of **Computer Games**?
In your household__________
Outside your household__________

5. What can we do to make **Computer Games** better?
____
____
____

6. Were there any parts of **Computer Games** that you didn't like?
____
____
____

7. Which parts of **Computer Games** did you like best?
____
____
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____
____

Name__________
Address__________
City__________ State__________
Zip__________ Phone( )__________

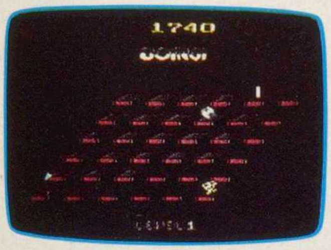
Send survey to: WHO ARE YOU? Carnegie Publications, 888 7th Ave. New York, NY 10106. Thanks!

FIRST, THE GOOD NEWS.
ASTRO CHASE

First Star Has 4 New Games.

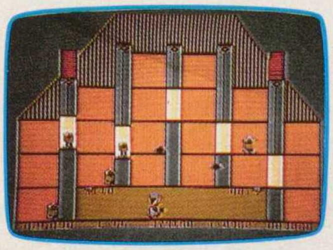
Fernando Herrera, designer of ASTRO CHASE™ and our design team again define "State of the Art." Superior graphics, real-time animations,™ multiple screens, intermissions, arcade-quality sound, innovative gaming, challenge and excitement—we deliver it all!

THE BAD NEWS? You can't play them all at once.



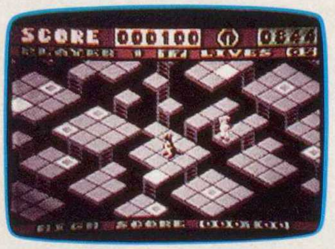
BOING!™

Designed by Alex Leavens
& Shirley A. Russell
ATARI Atari VCS 2600



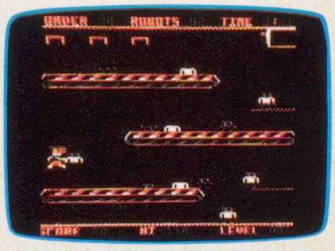
BRISTLES™

Starring Peter the Painter
ATARI Designed by Fernando Herrera
Atari Home Computers
Commodore Computers



FLIP and FLOP™

ATARI Designed by Jim Nangano
Atari Home Computers
Commodore Computers



PANIC BUTTON™

TRS-80 Color Computer
by Paul Kanevsky
Vic-20 Home Computer
by Wayne Lam

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FIRST STAR SOFTWARE INC

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WHICH COMPUTER PLAYS GAMES BEST?

EXCLUSIVE BEHIND-THE-SCREENS REPORT

By Martin Bass

APPLE II

apple II
plus

ATARI 1200XL

ATARI 1200XL

Many people won't admit it, but their main motivation for buying a computer is to play games. Of course, they might also want to try their hand at programming, learn a bit about how computers work, or use it for practical applications at home, but the game's really the thing. If gaming's a factor in your choice of computers, then the question "Which computer plays games best?" is a very important one.

The Establishment

Apple and Atari hit the market in the late '70s and quickly became established as the premier game-playing machines, mainly due to their superior graphics. Each boasts a loyal following. Programmers have usually written for one or the other, investing thousands of hours developing techniques that enabled them to wring every bit of power from the machines. As a result, there are now more games and a greater variety available for them than for any other computer. The future looks equally promising.

The New Contender

Since the Commodore 64 was released last November, it's set a new standard for value. Comparable in many ways to the "establishment" computers, the 64 costs only $200. With the Apple going for $1,200 and Atari's 800 about $300, you can see why the 64 has done so well—selling nearly a million units already. But why should you care how many Commodore has sold?

Because the more they sell, the more lucrative a market the 64 becomes for the major software houses, which up to now have produced games almost exclusively for the Apple and Atari. Already more than 100 hit games for those machines have been translated for the 64. One advantage here is that only the *best* games are being translated, so though there are

ATARI 800
COMMODORE VIC-20

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD FRIED

fewer 64 games out right now, you'll find a greater percentage of really worthwhile games. A number of *new* games have been written specifically for C-64, too. Dave Albert of Penguin Software, which is translating its entire line of hits like *Spy's Demise* for the 64, says that software manufacturers are "scrambling to write games for the 64."

The Commodore 64, described as a "sleeper" when it first hit the market, may turn out to be the "Apple of the Eighties."

Other Possibilities

What about the IBM, Timex-Sinclair 1000 and 2000, Commodore's VIC-20, Radio Shack's computers and the "Bill Cospy special"—the Texas Instruments 99/4A? All good computers, but with distinct disadvantages for game-playing.

The price of IBM's PC, for example, is way out of line for this purpose. Relatively few games exist for the IBM, also. But if you intend to pick up an IBM for business applications and want to avoid buying a second computer for gaming, there's a neat solution. It's the Quadlink, from the Quadram Corporation. For $600, this accessory enables the IBM to emulate—"operate like"—the Apple. Most, though not all, disk-based games for the Apple will run on the Quadlinked IBM. It's like buying an Apple for half-price.

> **"The Apple is great for role-playing adventure games, strategy games, war games, and brain-teasers."**

At the other end of the price scale sits the tiny Timex-Sinclair 1000, selling for less than $50. Though it was designed as an introductory computer that's great for learning BASIC programming, hundreds of games—all cassette-based—have been written for the TS-1000. Unfortunately, color and sound are missing (though they weren't overlooked in the TS-2000), and the unit crashes if you look at it sideways.

For only $25 more, you can pick up an Atari 400 or Commodore VIC-20. The Atari's clearly superior. It is completely compatible with the Atari 800, so the same cartridges as well as disk and cassette-based games work on either one. Utilizing the same video chip that delivers such outstanding color and animation on the 800, the 400 boasts impressive sound effects, too.

The big difference is that the 400 has only 16K memory, and the 800 has 48K. The smaller memory makes no difference if you're a fan of arcade-type games, which are usually marketed on cartridges. But the more elaborate adventure games are on disk and demand more memory. The 400's memory can be expanded and a disk drive added to meet these requirements, but for the cost of the additional memory, you can buy the 800 to begin with.

With the Commodore line, the situation's different: the two are not software compatible. (They employ the same

HARD NUMBERS ON THE GAME-PLAYING MACHINES

COMPUTER	RAM	LIBRARY	HIGH-RES	VOICES	CONTROLLER PORTS	PRICE
COMMODORE 64	64K	moderate-growing	320 × 200	3	2	$200
VIC-20	5-32K	large	160 × 96	3	1	$49-100
ATARI 400	16K	extensive	320 × 192	4	4	$49-100
ATARI 800	16-48K	extensive	320 × 192	4	4	$200-350
ATARI 1200	64K	extensive	320 × 192	4	2	$350-450
ATARI 600XL	16K	extensive	320 × 192	4	2	$199
ATARI 800XL	64K	extensive	320 × 192	4	2	$299
APPLE 2E	64-128K	extensive	280 × 192	1	1	$1395
TI 44/9A	16-48K	limited	256 × 192	1	2	$100
TRS COLOR	16-32K	limited	64 × 32	1	2	$299.95

> **"If you prefer maze games, car chases, climbing, and space shoot-outs, go with an Atari or the Commodore 64."**

BASIC, but the machine code addresses used by sophisticated software are not the same.) They use different-sized cartridges, too, and the VIC's video chip is not as advanced. Combined with the fact that the VIC's memory is only 5K, this reduces the possibilities for really complex games, numerous screens and sharp graphics. The VIC's memory is expandable and it uses the 64's disk drive, but you may as well buy the 64—it'll cost about the same. (Both the 64 and the VIC do feature excellent sound, though.)

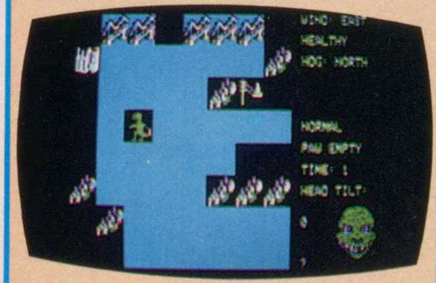
If you're mainly into arcade-type, maybe even educational games, the VIC's still a good bargain, and may be going for about $50 by Christmas. Plenty of cartridges are available, and more translations—like *Shamus* and *Pipes*—appear every day. Commodore's own programmers will certainly continue to support the VIC, with over one million units in homes across America.

Despite the impressive number sold, the Radio Shack line has never appealed to game-writers, which means its game library is limited. And unless you shell out more money for enhanced graphics capability, you'll be looking at a screenful of VCS-like images. If you're considering the TI 99/4A, ask yourself this: would you buy a computer from a man who sells Jello? Seriously, TI is having major problems in dealing with independent programming houses. Few of the major Atari and Apple hits have been translated for Radio Shack or TI, and both suffer from a lack of gaming software.

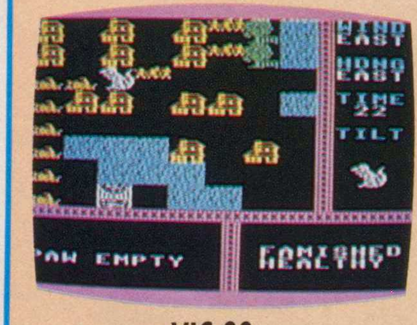
Then there are the really new computers: Mattel's Aquarius, Spectravideo's SV308, and the kamikaze squad of new Japanese imports. Any of these could

GRAPHICS COMPARISON

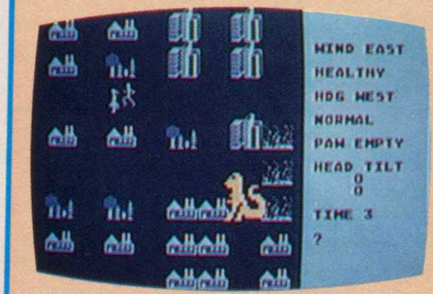
CRUSH, CRUMBLE AND CHOMP



APPLE

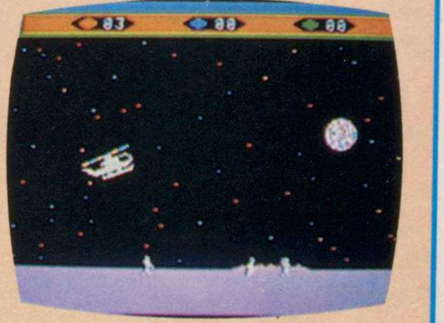


VIC-20

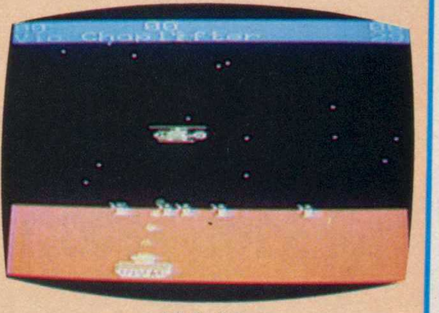


ATARI

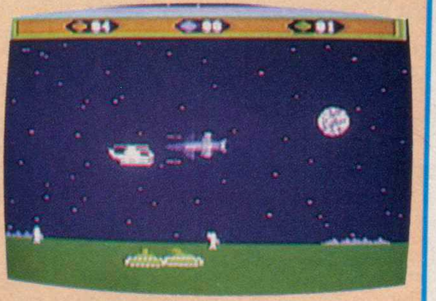
CHOPLIFTER



APPLE



VIC-20



ATARI

As you can see, a game that is translated into different formats may look very different in each format. In *Choplifter*, the VIC-20 version has no planet in the sky while the Atari and Apple versions are almost identical. *Crush, Crumble and Chomp* looks almost totally different on each computer. A game's graphics are partially determined by the capabilities of the computer it is to be played on, and partially determined by the talents of the programmer. Very often a different programmer is assigned to each game translation.

become a tremendous game machine or a big flop. It's simply too soon to say. Right now, they obviously suffer from a lack of games. One computer that will probably do well is Coleco's Adam, which is actually the Coleco game machine with a computer keyboard, a wafer-tape memory unit and a printer. It plays all the Coleco games, and enhanced versions of them as well.

A Closer Look

Apple, Atari, Commodore—these are the names you should consider. The Apple is the most expensive. Does it offer any advantages? Programmers at Penguin Software say that the way they can utilize the Apple's disk drive makes it more suitable for elaborate games: adventure and fantasy role-playing. *Dungeons and Dragons*-type, war and strategy games and heavy-duty brainteasers. There are more of these available for the Apple than for any other computer.

> **"For under $100, the Atari 400 has better graphics and more games than the Commodore VIC-20. But for $200-$300, the Commodore 64 beats the Atari 800. The 64 has more memory, great graphics, and the disk drive is $100 cheaper."**

On the other hand, if you prefer arcade games—mazes, car chases, gobbling, climbing, hopping and outer space shoot 'em ups—the Apple holds no advantage. In fact, it's relatively limited in this field. A big part of the arcade experience is sound, and the Apple is clearly inferior to Atari and Commodore on that score. Both Atari and Commodore's 64 feature true music generators—four and three voices respectively—but the Apple barely beeps and squeaks. Apple doesn't have movable graphic blocks—"sprites" on the 64 and "player-missiles" on Atari—one thing that makes animation so dazzling on the 400, 800 and C-64. Another disadvantage of the Apple is that you *must* have a disk drive, since it has no cartridge ports like the others. This adds about $500 to the Apple's price, boosting it to nearly $1,700. The 64 and Ataris are rigged to hook right into your color TV, too, unlike the Apple.

For most people, the choice will be either an Atari or a Commodore. If you're looking for a game machine under $100, the Atari 400 clearly beats the VIC-20. At the higher price level, there's either the Atari 800 (about $300) or Commodore 64 (around $200). What factors should you consider here?

The 800's price has been cut from the $600 it sold for through most of 1982. This stems from the product change Atari is now going through. The venerable 400 and 800 are being phased out and replaced by the 600XL and 800XL. During this changeover, the 400 and 800 are selling at tremendous discounts. For bargain hunters, this is a great chance to pick up a sophisticated game machine at a tremendous discount. You'll also see Atari's 1200XL discounted, too, but there have been numerous bugs reported in the 1200, and it only has two joystick ports instead of four like the 800. This is important now that multi-player games such as *Boulders and Bombs* from CBS are becoming more popular. The new Atari computer will be software-compatible with the older machines, feature 88K memory and have two joystick ports like the 1200.

The Atari game library is tilted toward arcade action, though many strategy and adventures are available. They're supplied on cartridge, cassette and disk. Often the disk version is released first, followed a few months later by the cartridge. If you don't mind waiting, you can save the $400 cost of a disk drive. As with the Apple, the most complex games, especially adventures, are usually marketed *only* on disk, so you'll have to figure in the extra cost if this is your favorite genre. Atari's tape drive costs about $50, and you can't use an ordinary tape recorder for playing cassette-based games.

If you opt for the Commodore 64, you'll save money two ways: the computer costs a mere $200, and the 1541 disk drive goes for $300 or less. The Commodore cassette drive, mandatory like the Atari's, is about $70, but many games are sold on cartridges—so you may save money by buying the computer alone. You might have to wait a few months for new Apple and Atari hits to be translated, but this situation may soon be reversed as more programmers develop games exclusively for the 64. According to Mark Turmell, author of *Fast Eddie*, *Sneakers* and *Turmoil*, "The Commodore 64 has the potential to display the most arcade-like games. It's leaps and bounds ahead of the Atari 800. The music and sound are incredible."

Before choosing between an 800 and the 64, visit a store and do some comparison shopping. These are some hit games available for both: *Choplifter*, *Frogger*, *Jawbreaker*, *The Pharoah's Curse* and *Fort Apocalypse*. Some gamers think the Atari's graphics are cleaner and smoother, but others can't see any difference. If graphics are a key point for you, check out this point.

Lower Prices in Sight

The fast-paced computer world changes every day. New products hit the shelves, week-old computers become obsolete, prices are slashed left and right. According to Clive Smith, senior analyst with the Yankee Group, one of the most significant events of 1983 will be IBM's new computer. "We expect the product, code-named 'the Peanut,' to be introduced in October. It will likely sell in the $700 range. And it will have a major impact on the home computer market." How could this affect your decision?

If you want an Apple but don't like the price, IBM's move is good news because Apple is expected to lower its price to match that of the Peanut. Other computer prices may also plummet. The consumer benefits from competition like this, and IBM's definitely going to accelerate the competition. Whichever computer you select, it's likely to cost less by Christmas than it does today. □

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?

ACTIVISION

Dreadnaught, Beam Rider, River Raid, Worm Womper (IN), Space Shuttle (VCS).

ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL

Nome Valley (Ap, At, 64, TRS, IBM). Reaganomics (AP, AT, 64). Rally Speedway (AT).

ATARI

Joust, Battlezone, Moon Patrol (VCS, 5200). Road Runner, Goofy, Xevious, Pengo, Baseball, Berzerk, Tempest, Robotron (5200). Cookie Monster, Alpha Beam, Big Bird, Dumbo Flying Circus, Miss Piggy's Wedding, Pigs in Space, Charlie Brown, Sorcerer's Apprentice, Krull, Snow White (VCS).

AVALON HILL

T.A.C., S.C.I.M.M.A.R.S., Parthian Kings (AP). Paris in Danger (AT). TGIF, Computer Football Strategy (64, AT). Computer Diplomacy (TRS).

BOMB

Funny Tadpole, Fortune Chase, Indianopolys (AT). Assault, Great Escape, Wall Defender, Splendour (VCS).

CBS ELECTRONICS

Targ, Kickman, Tunnel Runner (VCS). K-Razy Antics, K-Star Patrol (VIC). Wizard Of Wor, Gorf (5200 & IN). Wings, Domino Man, Madden Football (5200, IN, COL, AT, 5200). Blue-Print (5200, IN, AT). Mountain King (VCS, 5200, COL). K-Razy Shootout (5200). Omega Race (5200, VCS, IN, AT). Satan's Hollow (5200, AT).

COLECO

Super Action Baseball (COL).

COMMAVID

Stick 'Em, Kickapoo (VCS).

CREATIVE

Save New York, Spitball, Crisis Mountain, Astroblitz, Trashman, I Am 64 (64). In the Chips, Crisis Mountain (VIC).

DATAMOST

Conquering Worlds, New Human Fly, Ardy the Aardvark, Space Ark, Cavern Creatures, The Biletoads, Snowbound (AP). Cosmic Tunnels, Wiz N Roo, Mail Boy, Night Raiders (AT). Topsee Turvee, Jet Boot Jack, Paint Wizard (64 & AT). Monster Smash (64, AP, AT). Venus Voyager (64). Roundabout (VIC, AP, AT).

DATASOFT

Pooyan (TRS, AT, AP, 64, VIC). Dallas (AT, AP, TRS, 64).

EPYX

Gateway to Apshai, Lunar Outpost (AT, 64, TI). Silicon Warrior, Dragonriders of Pern, Gunfight/Seawolf, Starfire/Fire One, Swat Rescue (AT). Jumpman Jr. (64). Jumpman (AP, IBM). Fun With Art (AT, 64). Oil Barons (AP). Fun With Music (VIC, AT, TI). Pitstop (64, TI, COL, AT). Temple of Apshai (VIC).

FIRST STAR SOFTWARE

Boing! (VCS). Bristles, starring Peter the Painter (AT, VIC). Panic Button (TRS, IVC). Rent Wars, Flip Flop (AT).

FOX

Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, The Fall Guy, Mash II (VCS, VIC, AT, COL, TI).

GAMESTAR

Star League Baseball, Adventures of Dutch Doogan (AT, 64). Starbowl Football (64).

GCE

Fortress of Narzad, Spike, Bedlam, Web Wars, Spinball, Heads Up Action Soccer, Pole Position, Star Castle, Dark Tower, Polar Rescue (VEC).

IMAGIC

Nova Blast (COL, VIC). Microsurgeon, Demon Attack (TI 99/4A). Dragonfire (VIC). Subterranea (VCS). Laser Gates, Quick Step (5200, VCS, AT). Fathom (5200, VCS, IN, COL, AT, TI). Moonsweeper (5200, VCS, IN, COL, VIC, AT, TI). Wing War (5200, VCS, IN, COL, AT, TI).

HES

COCO (64)

INFOCOM

Planetfall (64, AP, AT, IBM, TRS, NEC, TI Pro, CP/M, DEC).

INSOFT

MysTrix (IBM)

KONAMI

Pooyan, Strategy X, Scramble, Marine Wars (VCS).

MATTEL

Major League All-Star Baseball, Motocross, Pinball, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons' "Treasures of Tarmin," Kool Aid, Thin Ice, Bump 'n' Jump, Locomotion, Rocky and Bullwinkle, Yogi's Adventure (IN).

NAP

Pursuit of the Pink Panther (VCS). War Room, Cavern Creatures, Swat Team 2000 (COL). Power Lords I (OD, VCS, COL).

PARKER BROTHERS

Tutankham (IN, COL, 5200). Q*Bert (VCS, IN, 5200, COL).

PDI

Clipper (Around the Horn in 1850), Swamp Chomp, Star Crystals, Android, Teddy's Magic Balloon, Jerry White's Game Machine (AT).

PENGUIN

Bouncing Kamungas, Expedition Amazon, Ringquest, Transylvania II, The Coveted Mirror, Minit Man, The Quest (AP, AT, 64). The Spy Strikes Back (AP, AT). Pie Man, Thunderbolts (AT, 64).

ROKLAN

Rack 'em Up!, Diamond Mine, Number Bowling (AT). Castle Hassle, Journey to the Planets (64). Wizard of Wor (AP, 64).

ROMOX

Taxi, Sea Chase, Waterworks, Topper, Starion (AT). Hen Pecked, Ant Eater (TI).

SCHOLASTIC

Flag Nut, Agent USA, Word Climber, Microzine #2 (AT).

SIERRA ON-LINE

Quest For Fire (COL). Mr. Cool (AT).

SIRIUS

Shadowscorcher, Ozzy Ozone, Blade of Blackpoole, Wayout, Type Attack, Critical Mass (64). Repton, Bandits, Final Orbit/ Burger Bash (VIC). Gruds in Space (AP, 64). Capture the Flag (AT). Space Eggs, Gorgon II (IBM PC).

SPECTRAVIDEO

Frantic Freddie, Armored Assault, Spectron, Super Cross Force, Flipper Slipper, Gunsight, Shoplifter, Miner 2049er (SPEC).

SPINNAKER

Alphabet 200, Cosmic Life, Delta Drawing, Delta Music, Facemaker, Up for Grabs (AT & 64).

STARPATH

Rabit Transit, Frogger, Sweat: The Decathlon Game, Party Mix, Sword of Saros, Survival Island (Supercharger VCS). Phaser Patrol (COL). Escape from the Mindmaster, Dragonstomper (COL, AT).

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

Geopolitique 1990 (AP). Computer Baseball (64). Battle for Normandy (IBM).

SUBLOGIC

Night Mission (64). Flight Simulator (AT, 64).

SUNWARE

Ambulance, Ant Colony, Cave Creatures, Driving Demons, Saint Nick, Crisis Mountain, Trashman, Astroblitz, Pipes (TI).

SYNAPSE

Alley Cat, Rainbow Rider, Encounter.

THORN EMI

Orc Attack, River Rescue (AT). 4th Encounter, Sub Commander (VIC). War Games (VIC, AT, TI).

VCS=Atari VCS, IN=Intellivision, 5200=Atari 5200, AT=Atari Home computers, COL=ColecoVision, GEM-=Coleco Gemini, VIC=Commodore VIC-20, 64=Commodore 64, AP=Apple II, TRS=Radio Shack TRS-80, TI=Texas Instruments TI 99/4A, VEC=Vectrex, IBM=IBM PC, ODY=Odyssey², SPEC-Spectravideo computer.

CONTEST!

WIN COLECO'S

ALL YOU'VE GOT TO DO

Players who really know their games can identify a game easily by looking at a photo of it. Players who live, breathe, and *eat* games can identify a game merely by seeing a description of it. Some of the games on these pages will be familiar to you, others may just be on the fringes of your memory. The *one* reader who can identify them all will win Coleco's new Adam computer. Good luck!

1

Honest Bob's Discount Tours never promised you a rose garden when you bought that super-cheap vacation package. But they might have mentioned the cannibals, bears and guerrilla warriors that make your "home away from home" look like a movie set after an Irwin Allen production.

Once you awake in a dank, sleepy prison somewhere on the Dark Continent and hear a couple of rotten-toothed guards joking about how you're going to be led before a firing squad the next day, you have no alternative but to get the heck outa there and make tracks for the border. That's why they call this game . . .

2

Your mission, should you choose to accept it (and you won't enjoy this game if you don't play it!), is to search and destroy. What's that? You want *more* clues? OK, the targets are enemy bridges and oil depots (unless you want to think of them as your own troops, whom you've decided to rebel against and blast into oblivion).

Commanding a B1 strato-wing assault jet, you're racing across the sky when a wave of jet marauders and helicopters open up on you with everything they've got. Below, camouflaged gunships pepper the sky with anti-aircraft shells. The terrain changes fast and often, making survival a tricky business. On top of that, you've got to accomplish this mission without running out of fuel. Its a dirty job, but somebody's gotta do this . . .

3

The ape's grabbed the girl and dragged her to the top—it's up to you to rescue her, but it's not going to be easy. As you struggle to reach little Mabel, this game's "damsel in distress," the beast tries to knock you off by throwing birds, bats and rats.

Climbing one treacherous level at a time, you find that the going gets tougher the higher you go. In fact, you won't stand a chance unless you possess the "Good luck" wished on you by the little black bi-plane flying overhead. Even then you'll have both hands full with . . .

4

How many games let you control *two* characters? In this one, you control the actions of a pair of powerful warriors, Hercules and Jason, as they seek the valuable wool of a certain four-footed creature. The search takes place within the winding corridors of an ancient maze somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea. High-res graphics make this adventure something you'd want to take along to pass the time if you were ever lost in the . . .

5

It's the strangest-looking varmint you've ever seen. It loves to lay eggs, but watch out: if an egg hits the floor before you can catch it, the yolk's on you! Think you've got a clear shot at the crafty critter? Have at it, and watch those feathers fly! Get him mad enough, and this wacko will move in even closer.

6

Can you manuever your spacecopter through the treacherous tunnels of an alien planet to defeat the dreaded giant Gond in his lair, the mythical Mystery City? First you must blast your way past packs of tentacled Garimes, flying Kemlus snakes and Hovering Mist ships.

Without your laser cannons that fire in all four directions simultaneously, you'd never get through the rain of Romeda ships in the Bleak Zone, the Helm balloons of the Rainbow Zone, and the deadly killers in the Styx Zone. All this game's missing is a Twilight Zone, but Rod Serling didn't live long enough to play . . .

7

Chasing notorious monsters through creepy castles, haunted houses and spooky graveyards is just part of the fun in this one. Three screens of action include Dracula's five-story haunted house, Frankenstein's castle (protected by roving wolfmen) and a graveyard where you'll face the Chameleon Man and his horde of spiders. You play the part of the red-headed "SuperZapper"—who has one heck of a fun time at the . . .

8

Your planet's at war with Planet Cyclon, and you've volunteered for the most hazardous mission of the war so far—a solo attack on the defensive fortress of Gemini, 40 kilometers south of Cyclon's capital state of Hennon. Piloting the last of the Mark V fighter bombers, you're armed with the Quark bomb and laser cannons. The deadliest thing in your path? Fission bombs dropped by alien satellites. After penetrating these defenses, you'll encounter sliding airlocks that must be blown up before you can continue. The fate of your planet rests in your hands—that's why you've got to make a successful . . .

ADAM COMPUTER!

IS NAME THESE 12 GAMES

9

When the one-eyed Alien Commander's face fills the screen, you know you're up against a truly fearsome foe. He challenges you to battle, then sends his scout ships zooming in. Blast them before they combine into a larger ship and shoot withering fireballs at you. Then dock with a mother ship to add the firepower necessary to fight it out with wave after wave of cruisers and destroyers. Will you survive the Commander's . . .

10

Transport yourself back to those diabolical days on the Spanish Main—when evil pirate ships flew the "skull & crossbones" and struck terror into the hearts of young and old. You're trapped aboard the wickedest pirate ship of all, with only your courage and the cold steel of your sword to protect you. Lunge, parry, slash and stab your way to freedom, just like a genuine . . .

11

Three intrepid explorers are lost in the jungle. As captain of a powerful river boat, you hope to find them and claim the reward. Navigating some of the world's wildest waters won't be easy, especially since you must concentrate on listening for signals from the explorers' weak radio transmitter that tell you where they are. Save them all and drop them off at a jungle hospital to collect a bonus.

12

In this exciting arcade-style game, you're the commander of a 19th-century artillery piece in a besieged stockade. For each shot, you must specify a type of ammunition—ball, cannister, shell or spherical case—and fuse length (if applicable), then set the elevation and deflection of the cannon. The computer controls the enemy forces, randomly attacking with calvary, infantry or another artillery piece. When you play this game, your house will roar with the sound of the . . .

I CAN NAME THEM ALL!

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
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11. ______________________________
12. ______________________________

Name______________________________

Address______________________________

City____________________ State______________ Zip____________

Contest Rules

Entries must be postmarked no later than December 7, 1983. One entry per person. If there is more than one correct entry, we will select one of them randomly by our in-house computer. Void where prohibited by law. The winner will be announced in our April/May issue.

SEND ENTRIES TO: WIN ADAM, COMPUTER GAMES MAGAZINE, 888 7TH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10106.

HIGH SCORES=BIG BUCKS FOR ARCADE SUPERSTARS

THESE GUNS FOR HIRE!

By Steve Bloom

DEATHTRAP
FOR TAXIS ONLY
TEMPEST
Williams
DEFENDER
MS. PAC-MAN
MIDWAY
Bally

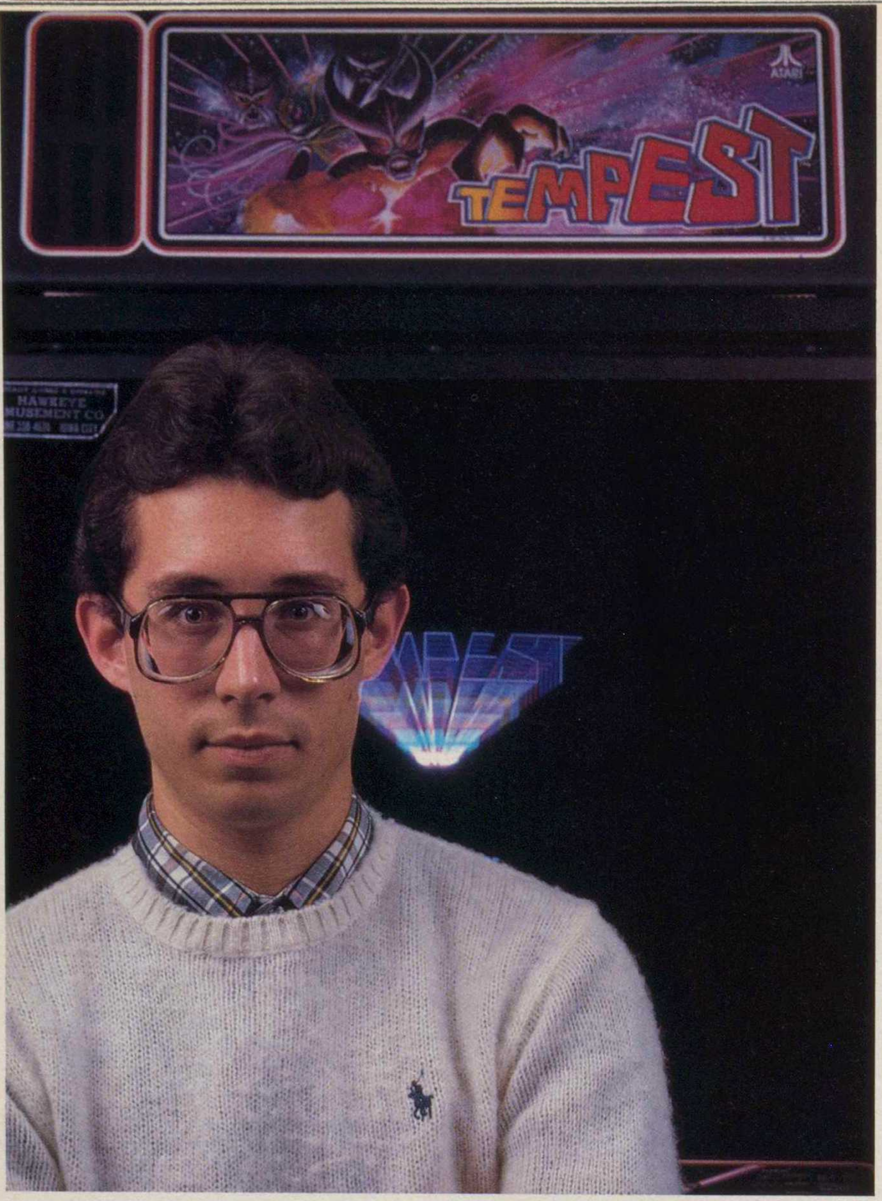
Aames Marino skipped two and a half weeks of school last February to shoot ads for Atari. The "Kid," as he is known in arcades all across New York's Long Island, is a hired gunner, ready to blast away video aliens at an art director's request. "I'm a professional video game player," says the Kid, who claims that he once held the *Stargate* world record for 15 minutes. "I play, they film it, and then I get paid." Marino usually clears about $200 a day, not to mention all the free plays he gets as a bonus.

"For the *Pole Position* ad, I must have played about 100,000 free games. I guess you could say I got pretty good at it," he smirks.

Marino is just one of the many superstar vid-kids who are taking advantage of their unusual talent in a "commercial" way. Three years ago, Leo Daniels of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, realized he could play *Asteroids* better than anyone else in his local arcade. When Daniels discovered that someone had scored 21 million points while building up 80 ships, he decided to shoot for the record. Twice his record-setting attempts were thwarted by impatient arcade managers who "pulled the plug" on the machines, and each time Daniels was treated with front-page coverage in the area newspaper. By the time he finally established a new record of 26 million, Daniels was already a full-blown local hero. It should come as no surprise then that Daniels, who had worked in arcades every summer during high school, was subsequently asked to manage the Light Years game room in Wrightsville Beach.

TUTANKHAM
STERN
CENTIPEDE
DONKEY KONG
Nintendo

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ENRICO FERRORELLI/WHEELER PICTURES



Leo Daniels—He scores 26 million on Asteroids, manages an arcade chain, and Atari is considering his game proposals.

He accepted the offer, and two months later was promoted to vice-president of Light Years Amusements, which operates several arcades, and rewarded with 25 percent of the stock in the company.

Explains Louten Hedgepeth, president of Light Years: "Leo is the Jimmy Connors of video games. He's dedicated everything to video games since he was 13-years-old. He's a nice, clean-cut kid, who all the other kids look up to. We thought he'd be a good man to have on our team."

Hedgepeth, however, is concerned about Daniels' future. "Anything that has to do with the games, Leo can handle," he says. "But he lacks exposure in business. It wouldn't hurt if he took a few business courses. He's never been to college. I'm always encouraging him to do that."

At least for now, Daniels doesn't seem to be very interested. He and Steve Caudell, a computer programmer, have designed two coin-op videos that Atari has expressed interest in seeing. And Daniels is content to write articles about games for magazines and contribute to books, even though his publishing experiences thus far have been somewhat discouraging. It was Leo Daniels who provided Tom Hirschfeld with most of the information for *How to Master the Video Games*, Bantam's best-selling tip book. He was credited in the dedication, but received no money from either Hirschfeld or Bantam. "I got ripped," Daniels says without a trace of anger.

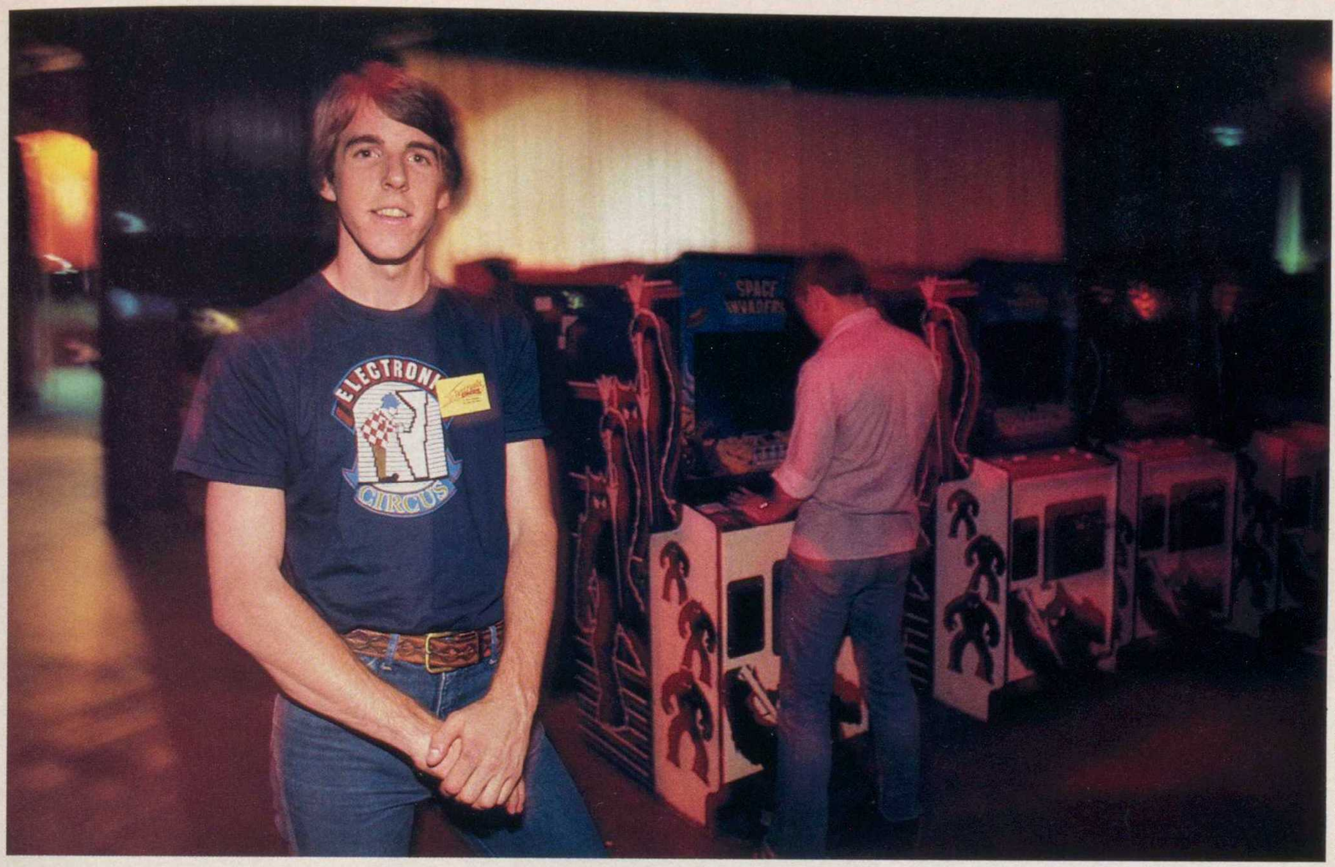
For Hirschfeld's second coin-op book, he *did* see part of the advance. Unfortunately, Bantam never published the sequel. "They said Tom was doing it," Daniels explains, "but they wanted me to go over the manuscript. To be quite honest, he didn't really know much about the games." Daniels was also "acknowledged" in *Defending the Galaxy: The Complete Handbook of Video Gaming.*

For most vid-kids, notoriety doesn't come easy. Unless, of course, you've been anointed by Walter Day, the video game den father of Ottumwa, Iowa. He's the keeper of the high scores, and has organized events that have attracted *That's Incredible* and *Life* magazine. Day was even consulted about which players should be selected to participate in the Electronic Circus, the video game roadshow that was supposed to be touring the country, had it not closed down after two days. To the kids who know him, Walter Day, whose Uncle Walter's All-American Brand Ice Cream is just one of his numerous endeavors, is a kind of guru. Short, balding, mustachioed and dapper, Day has this to say about *his* kids: "They are virtually professionals, like any other group of athletes. Video games is all they talk about."

So much so that family phone bills skyrocket once Day introduces fellow record-setters to each other. The constant long-distance calling has caused more than one irate parent to lodge a complaint with Uncle Walter, who replies, "That's the only problem as far as they're concerned." Barbara Mitchell, whose son Billy is the reigning *Donkey Kong* champ, agrees: "I'm very happy about his involvement with the games. They take up all his spare time and keep him out of trouble." The Mitchells even came up with an answer to the phone bill dilemma: last spring they brought *Centipede* king Darrin Olson, Billy's best video-playing friend, all the way down to their Florida home from Calgary, Alberta —all expenses paid—as a high school graduation present for Billy.

But that's the good news. The bad news is when the media-enhanced *image* of the video game superstar receives more attention than the *person* who just happens to play *Dig Dug* and *Ms. Pac-Man* incredibly well. Take the case of Ned Troide, *Defender* connoisseur to the score of 72,999,975. Troide's November '82 journey to Ottumwa, where he and other super-gamers were captured forever in a *Life* photo essay, was well documented in the local newspapers. He was quoted as saying video games had changed his life, and that now he planned to pursue a career in computers. His immediate goal was to attend junior college and then apply to the University of Southern Florida.

But three months later, Ned Troide's bubble burst. He confessed to 18 counts of



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN GOODMAN

Eric Ginner—After shooting enough mushrooms to earn the world record in* Millipede*, now he's shooting ads for Atari.

burglary and was sentenced by a Florida court to two years in prison, plus six years probation. Troide and four others had ripped off a golf course, a record shop, a tree nursery and an arcade, netting $100 cash, a TV, beer and video game tokens. It was the news that he had exchanged some of the money for more tokens that earned the most publicity, however.

"One hostile detective kept insisting they did it to get money to play," says Ed Troide, Ned's father. "That's a bunch of baloney. Ned's so good at the games he doesn't *need* the money to play them." Troide is convinced that his son was "the subject of yellow journalism because of his celebrity gamer status. He got a lot of treatment in the press, both positively and hyper-negatively. He was built up as the ringleader, which wasn't true." Only Ned, who is 18, and one other defendant were prosecuted as adults. The latter was sentenced to six months and is already out of jail.

"There's no question that Ned got hit the hardest," Troide explains. "It's just an unfortunate thing. He fell in with some bad kids who all thought they were playing James Bond. Ned's a stupid kid, not a criminal. He was bored, but it had nothing to do with the games. They certainly didn't warp his mind. I don't blame it on the games at all."

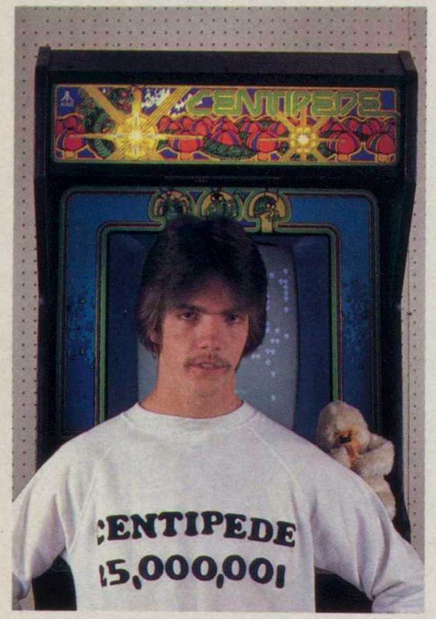
> **"I play, they film it, and then I get paid," says Marino, who gets about $200 a day.**

A less tragic but equally compelling story is that of Steve Sanders, a one-time *Donkey Kong* record holder and author of *The Video Master's Guide to Donkey Kong*. Before Sanders came on the scene, no one had been able to break the million mark at *Donkey Kong*. His 1.4 million score was confirmed by Day as the world record in 1982, but in April of this year, Sanders startled the video game world with the shocking confession that he had lied about the score all along. In a letter to Day and twelve other high scorers, he admitted to his crime and pleaded for forgiveness. Day responded firmly and swiftly by banning Sanders from the Scoreboard and relieving him of his duties as its Kansas City regional correspondent. Why did Sanders play the hoax? Says Day: "He wanted to get ahead." And Sanders? "I got greedy this one time," he concedes.

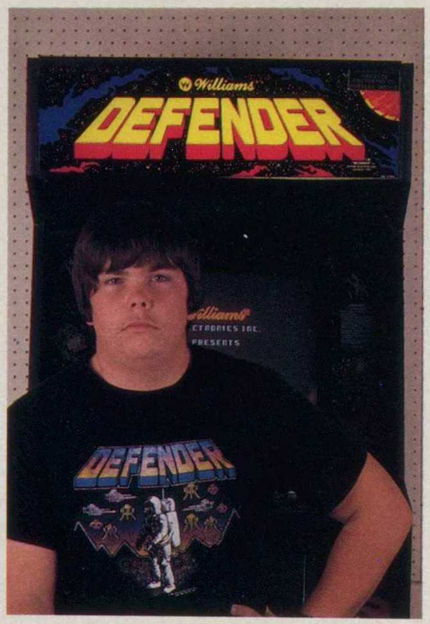
"It all started when I won a *Pac-Man* machine in a contest," Sanders explains. "I was so good at *Pac-Man* that I decided I wanted to write a book about it. So I contacted Bantam, but they said they already hired someone to write it. Well, at the time, my *Donkey Kong* high score was about 200,000, so they agreed to let me write that book. My next high was 500,000, and then, 863,500—using seven men on the original chip. That was the high score until someone at Light Years hit 912,000. That's virtually impossible, but Walter [Day] stood by that score. Well, I tried and tried to beat it, but I couldn't. Then I heard that Walter was going to print up a poster with all the names of the record holders and their scores on it. That's when I lied about my score. It was just to get on the poster.

"After awhile, I realized I had to do

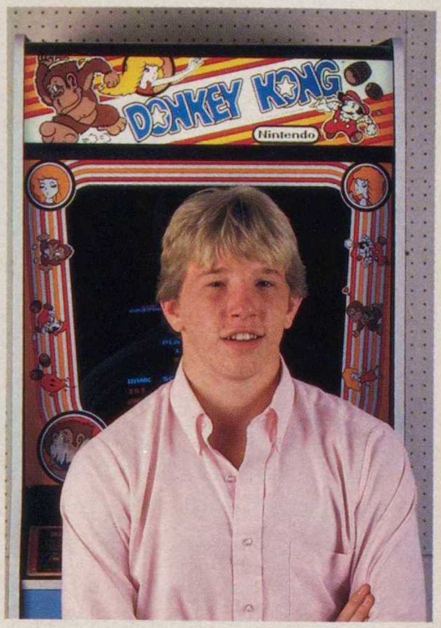
something about this," Sanders continues. "I would go to contests and wouldn't be any good. Then I heard about the Electronic Circus. I was raised a Baptist and consider myself a moral person, and I knew God wouldn't let me in the Circus until I did something about it. So right after the AOE [Amusement Operators Expo, held in March] I wrote up the letter. Well, it ended up that I was named the team captain. Everyone has been very understanding."



Billy Mitchell—"Maybe Nintendo will want me to do some promotion for them."



Ned Troide—72,999,975 points and 18 counts of burglary.



***Steve Sanders—863,500 points gave him the right to write* The Video Master's Guide to Donkey Kong.**

"For the *Pole Position* ad, I played 100,000 free games."

Well, not exactly everyone. Sanders remains excluded from Day's Scoreboard and is not on particularly good terms with several players, including Leo Daniels, who charges that "Steve really brownnosed to get the position. It blew everyone's mind when we heard he was selected as captain."

The Electronic Circus, an aborted product of Meeting Planners, Inc., of Boston, could have been the best opportunity yet for ambitious super vid-kids. Twelve gamers, including Sanders, were hired to begin the tour that debuted in Boston on July 15th. They were to compete among themselves in front of audiences for cash prizes. Salaries were set at $250 a week, but it was the prize money that had the kids salivating. Originally, Meeting Planners estimated that the average prize for the top-ranked player each week would total $3,000 ($2,000 for second place, $1,000 for third place, and so on). This was assuming the Circus would generate about $2 million in gate receipts weekly. But by opening day, that whole premise had changed. Percentage of the gate was out and corporate sponsorship was in. No prize money was paid out the first weekend, though bonuses were promised based on the gate.

The next thing anyone knew, the Electronic Circus had closed down and snuck out of town. On the third day of the Circus, suddenly the hall was padlocked and there were no explanations. A representative from the Circus public relations firm told us it was "union difficulties" that caused the shutdown. None of the rock bands hired, and none of the video game superstars, ever got a cent.

Not many teenagers have the experience to know the ways of the business world—to know who is telling the truth and who is scamming. Some kids are making good money from their video game skills, but others are getting ripped off. Before the Electronic Circus slinked out of Boston, Billy Mitchell had said, "My goal is to pay my way through four years of college at the University of Florida. I'd like to stay with the Circus for as long as possible. It's a great opportunity to get my name known in the video game world. Who knows, maybe Nintendo will want me to do some promotions for them someday. I *am* the world record holder on three of their games, you know."

Hopefully, Nintendo *will* hire Mitchell. It is not unreasonable to think that young people who excel at video games could make their living from them, just as baseball stars, track stars, and ice skating stars are paid for their skills. A lot of hopes were crushed by the Electronic Circus, but there will be other opportunities. Walter Day himself is planning to pick up the torch. He is organizing teams for the "World Video Olympics"—the U.S. versus Japan. There is a buck to be made here. ☐

THE HOTLINE

Up-to-the-minute gaming news

....NEW YORK-LONDON-PARIS-SUNNYVALE....

The first LASERDISC arcade game from ATARI will be called FIREFOX. It will include footage from that outrageous scene in the CLINT EASTWOOD movie of last year. Other laserdisc news: According to THE NEW YORK TIMES, players are taping $5 BILLS on the screen of DRAGON'S LAIR to be sure they get their turn to play. The game is earning up to $1,000 a week. DON BLUTH, who did the animation, plans to make five more laserdisc games in the next year. COLECO has paid $2 MILLION for the home rights to Dragon's Lair, and may be creating some kind of VIDEO DISC ADAPTER that will plug into COLECOVISION. SEGA, which is owned by PARAMOUNT PICTURES, is going through the Paramount film libraries in search of future laserdisc games. They hint that they will have to photograph a real STOCK CAR RACE for a possible laserdisc driving game. So long, POLE POSITION...

Atari's STAR WARS game is dragging people into the arcades also. The game was three years in the making. Designers MICHAEL HALLY and GREG RIVERA were working on a flight simulator game when the ATARI/LUCASFILM deal came through. GEORGE LUCAS did not assist in the design, but he did approve it. The game has SEVEN MUSICAL THEMES plus voices, which took six months to perfect. It is one of the few arcade games to have a HORIZONTAL screen, and the sit-down version has a larger screen. Scores are relatively high because the designers felt players would feel that blowing up the DEATH STAR deserved big points. The game is the first of a trilogy, but it will never be an Atari home game because PARKER BROTHERS owns the rights to the title STAR WARS. Atari may LICENSE the game to Parker.

QUICKIES: COMMODORE has fired all of its nationwide sales force, except for three managers...BRODERBUND has inked a deal with LIGHTNING SOFTWARE to make a VIC-20 version of the hit MASTERTYPE...A movie called PAC-MAN'S REVENGE is in the works. It will be an adventure comedy and is budgeted at $10 MILLION...Computer software companies are looking at RECORD STORES as major outlets for their products, and COMPUTERLAND is suing a new chain, SOFTWARELAND, to prevent the use of the word "land" in the title...DATAMOST has purchased ENGLISH SOFTWARE...ELECTRONIC ARTS is translating all their games for the COMMODORE 64...On July 18th, APPLE gave away their ONE-MILLIONTH computer to a CALIFORNIA school...

RETRACTION: We deeply apologize for our misinformed item about Marjac Technology's RomScanner in our August/September issue. The RomScanner is actually an incredible new device that plugs into the Atari VCS and accepts ten cartridges at the same time. A push of a button will call up any of the ten games in less than a second. You don't have to plug cartridges in and out and you don't have to turn the VCS on and off. Marjac is also about to release RomScanners for the Commodore 64 and ColecoVision. For more info on this product, write to Marjac at: 2061 West Mill Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53209.

According to a new book, MIND AT PLAY: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF VIDEO GAMES, men and women TALK about the same amount while they play video games, about one comment every 40 seconds. Also, more than one-third of the 2,000 players interviewed said that MATH was their favorite subject in school. The book is by Geoffrey and Elizabeth Loftus, and will be available from Basic Books in New York on November 14th...

The winner of our WHAT IS Q*BERT SAYING contest is DOUG PIROH of CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY, who wrote, "OH NO! I HAVE TO BLOW MY NOSE, AND I DON'T HAVE ANY HANDS!" Runners-up were, "Your mama's a Smurf" "I just want to say it's not all sunglasses and autographs" "Oy Veh!" "Inka Dinka Doo" "Q*Bert is ordering a pizza" "Ouch, my lymph nodes!" and "Fungus-faced, toad-sucking, mule-headed, chicken-livered, turkey-tailed piece of slime!" Unfortunately, we haven't finished tabulating the thousands of WIN AN ARCADE GAME entries, so the winner will be announced next issue.

CALL THE COMPUTER GAMES HOTLINE (212) 581-8267

How To Insult Your Computer's Mother

By Shay Addams

This is it — the first time *anyone* has ever interviewed a computer program instead of the programmer! It's called *Abuse*, and it's a game you will love to hate. All you do is insult *Abuse* through his keyboard and Abuse tells you how he feels about you and your relatives. Here's an actual conversation we had with this inventive and funny program from Don't Ask Software . . .

CG: This is the first time I've ever interviewed a computer program. Shall I call you *Mr. Abuse*, or just *Abuse*?

Abuse: I don't care what you call me, you wretched bucket of slop! Just don't touch me!

CG: I *didn't* touch you. But I *do* have to type my questions on this Atari keyboard to conduct this interview.

Abuse: Why don't you go imitate a bowl of oatmeal instead?

CG: That's not very nice. I'm beginning to wonder if this interview was such a good idea after all.

Abuse: Why don't we change the subject, you babbling cretin?

CG: Okay. What about the situation in the Middle East?

Abuse: You're way too slow for me. Let me show you how this is done. *You* say, "What's up, you stupefied clod." *I* say, "May your next-door neighbor french-fry your face." *You* say, "Go vomit garbage." *I* respond with: "May a dissipated itinerant laborer laminate your left nostril."

CG: And that's all you do, act like a desktop Don Rickles?

Abuse: Beats eating floppy disks like your stupid brother.

CG: Since *you* brought up the subject, what about *your* family?

Abuse: I'm not amused. How about you go chase cockroaches?

CG: No, I'm sure our readers would really like to know about your mother.

Abuse: Don't insult Sylvia Atari! I'm getting disgusted with you, you gluttonous excuse for a human being.

CG: Now you're getting me angry.

Abuse: May an unruly weirdo live on top of your mother's deviated septum.

CG: How about your father?

Abuse: Kiss my parallel port, and may a shell-shocked duck carrom you off a fork-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

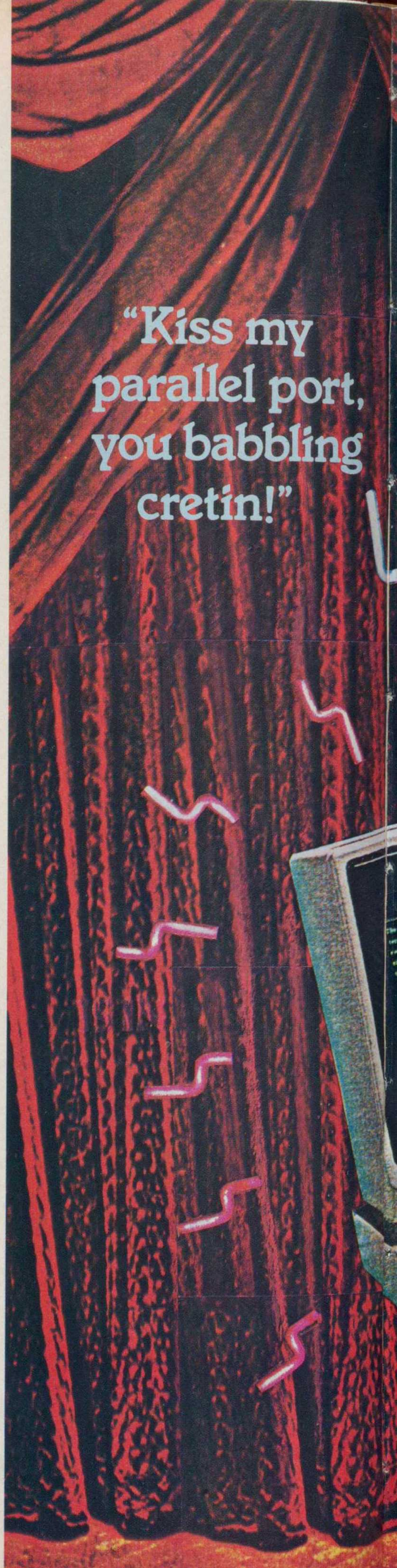

"Kiss my parallel port, you babbling cretin!"

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY ANNE SHEA

"Go hose down your hardware, hockey puck!"
composition terminal

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STAR WARS*

THE COIN VIDEO EXPERIENCE FROM ATARI

It's the blockbuster game you've been waiting for! Now you can take part in the STAR WARS phenomenon! You cannot ignore the power of THE FORCE*!

DARTH VADER* beware! STAR WARS by ATARI introduces a new age of coin video entertainment. Graphic simulation that plunges you head-on into the world of LUKE SKYWALKER*. Music and dialogue created from the movie. Special effects that blast you into an unknown dimension!

Dare to challenge DARTH VADER in galactic combat. Go in for the attack. Blow up the DEATH STAR*. Make **your** mark in the annals of epic space exploits! Remember—THE FORCE will be with you. Always.

ATARI®
A Warner Communications Company

GADGETS FOR GAMERS

Gaming's even more fun when you've got the right high tech toys to complement the action. Controllers, voice synthesizers, monitors . . . everything you need to boost your scores can be found in the next six pages of high-powered peripherals. Stock up now for a stronger America.

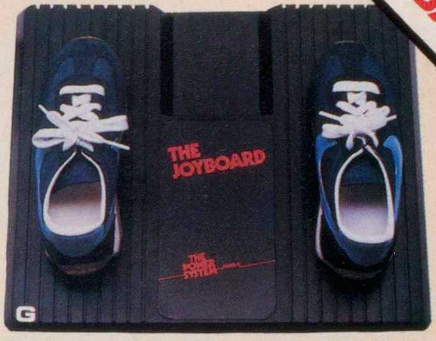
(A) Questar IIC: Dual bomb and laser buttons for Coleco. $49.95. Atari-types, too.

(B) Looking for a light touch? TG Products' "Enjoystick" is a very fast featherweight. Left or right-handed versions. $29.95.

(C) Got those 5200 joystick blues? Grab a Wico 5200 keypad/joystick for $34.95. (Also for IBM PC, Apple II, TRS-80 III.) **(D)** Another Wico: the "Boss" was born to run at $19.95. **(E)** The Remote Champ "Freedom Fighter" from Champion works great up to 20 feet away.

F
4
8
prostick II

(F) Prostick II has switchable 4/8-way gate (4 for maze games, 8 for space). Fire button in front. $24.95 from Newport Controls.



(G) Hang ten on the Joyboard, and surf your way to a billion points. Includes a skiing game, *Mogul Maniac*, with more to follow. From Amiga, $39.95.

(I) Get a Buck Rogers grip on reality with Atari's new Space Age Joystick, a real blast at $14.95. Now what're you waiting for—go shoot-'em-up!

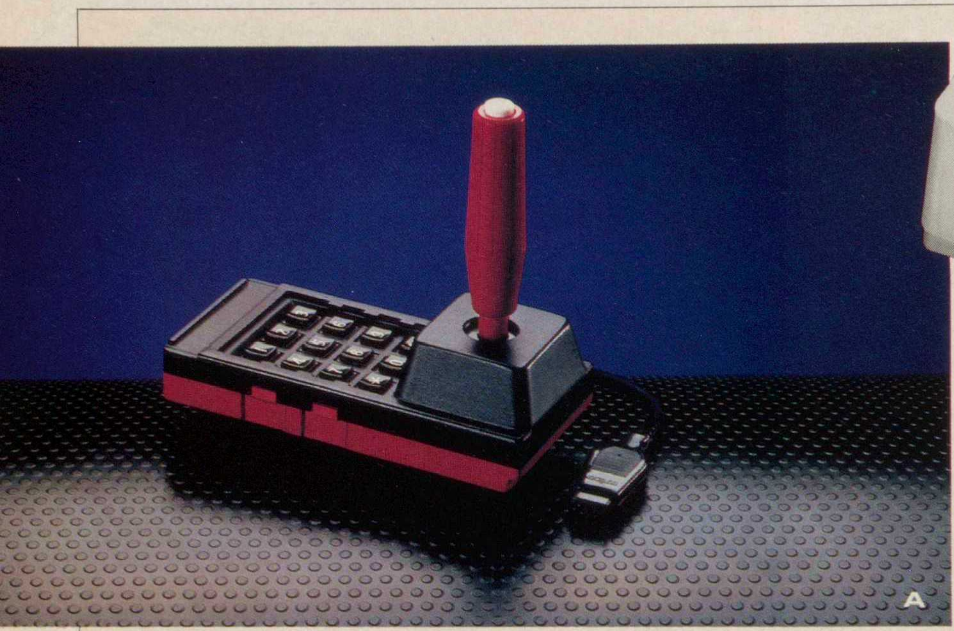
(J) The Z-Stick (Zircon): extra button slows you down in emergencies. $19.95. **(K)** Competition Pro's leaf switches give smooth action. Coin Control, $19.95.

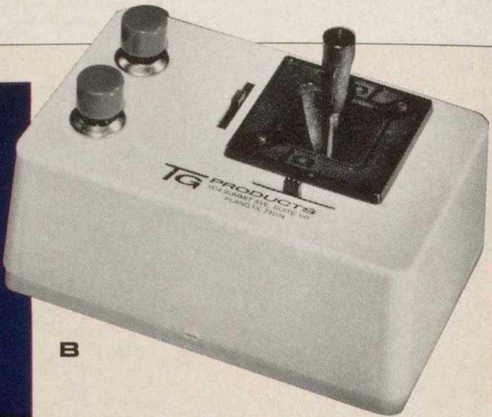
(H) At $34.95, Zircon's track-ball is a high roller's dream come true. Features adjustable rapid-fire, recessed fire buttons and better response than most balls.

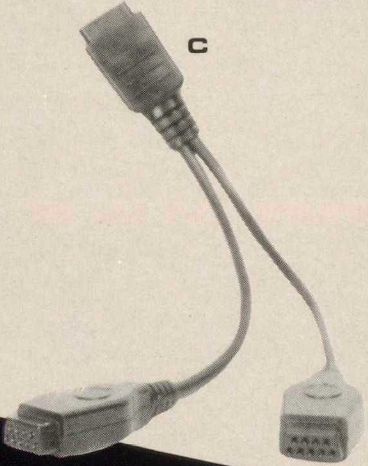
All controllers are compatible with Atari VCS and computers, Sears, VIC-20 and Commodore 64 unless otherwise noted.

K
COMPETITION-PRO™
JOYSTICK

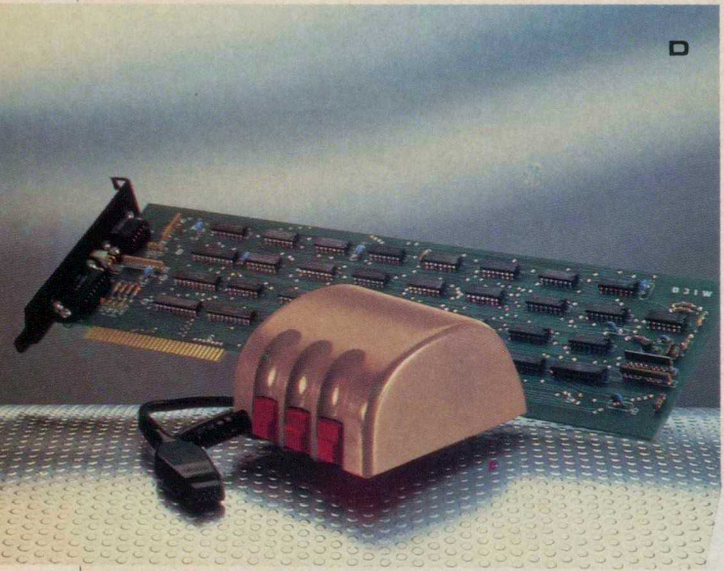
GADGETS FOR GAMERS







(A) Coleco owners may get better control with Wico's joystick/keypad combo, $19.95. **(B)** Apple gamers will want to check out TG Products' dedicated joystick, $64.95. **(C)** Questar's "reverse Y" adapter lets two people use the same stick; Coleco and TI 99/4A owners can use it to plug in gourmet controllers. $9.98.



TRI FIRE
4
8
Prostick III
E

(D) No games have been designed for Wico's "Computer Command" mouse, but it makes word processing a lot more fun. **(E)** The Prostick III has dual fire buttons up front for Coleco games, and 4/8-way gates. Newport Controls, $29.95.

(F) Tired of glaring at that fuzzy TV screen? Move up to a composite color monitor like the Amdek Color I. At about $299, it's compatible with most computers and has built-in audio circuitry. **(G)** For hard-copy of Infocom games, Smith Corona's "Memory Correct III Messenger" electronic typewriter is also a computer printer. $599 ($179 for interface).

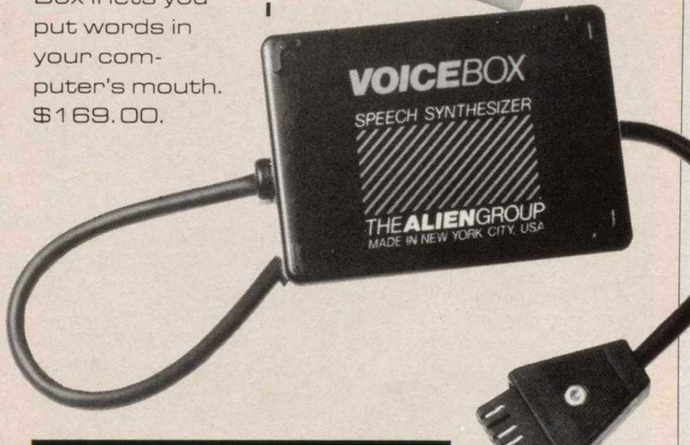
F

G

(H) Power surges? Get Discwasher's 2-stage Power Line Monitor, $69. **(I)** For Ataris with 48K, the Voice Box II lets you put words in your computer's mouth. $169.00.

H

I



(J) General Electric's "Command Performance" series is a complete line of modular component-stereo video systems. In addition to other features, each set has custom jacks for game consoles and computers.

J

K

(K) For telegaming on Compuserve, you can't beat the Hayes "Smartmodem II." $699.

GADGETS FOR GAMERS

VCH
FIRE
THRUST
WARP
PHOTONS
A

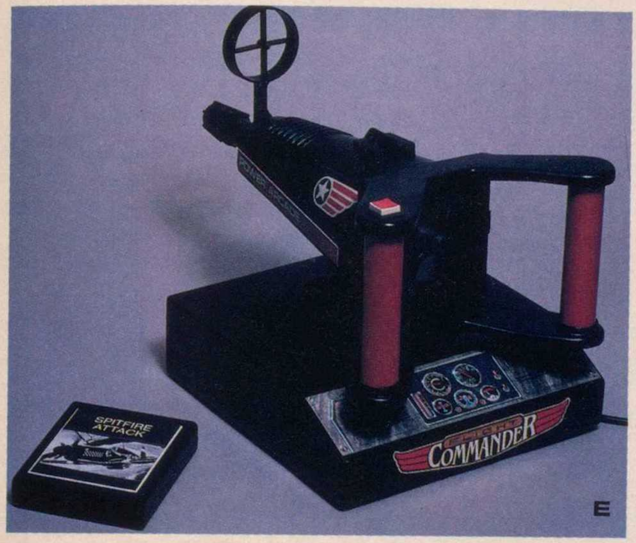
MATTEL ELECTRONICS
AQUARIUS
ON
1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4
OFF
COMMAND CONSOLE

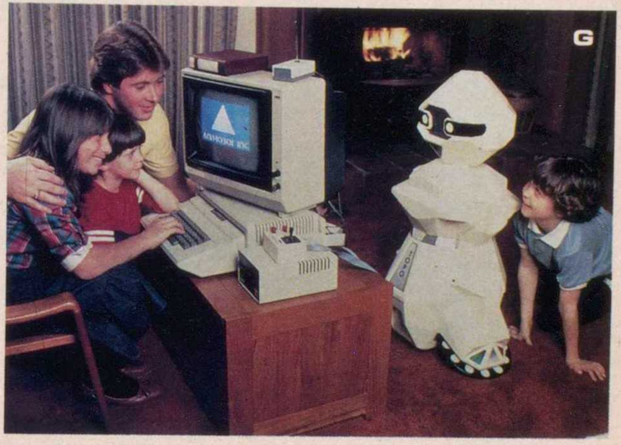
B
CAUTION: ELECTRICALLY OPERATED PRODUCT
ELECTRONIC
GRAND·MASTER
THE COMPUTERIZED ADVERSARY THAT MOVES ITS OWN PIECES, PLAYS BRILLIANTLY AND RESPONDS WITHIN MINUTES...EVEN SECONDS
GRAND MASTER
Let's Play Chess

COMMAND CONSOLE
©M.I. 1983
C

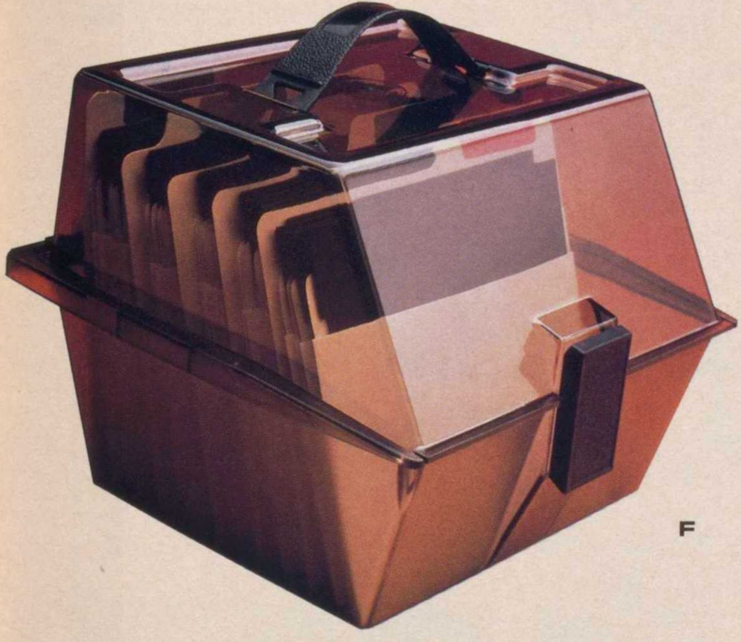
(A) The Video Coin Holder (Nicoletti Enterprises) holds a handful of quarters. $6.95. **(B)** Tired of Pac-Man? Try new game from Milton Bradley—chess! $500. **(C)** Aquarius users can run the whole house with the $93 Command Console.

COLECO
PERMA POWER
BATTERY ELIMINATOR/AC ADAPTOR
The permanent substitute for batteries!
For Most Products That Use:
CAUTION-ELECTRICALLY OPERATED PRODUCT
D

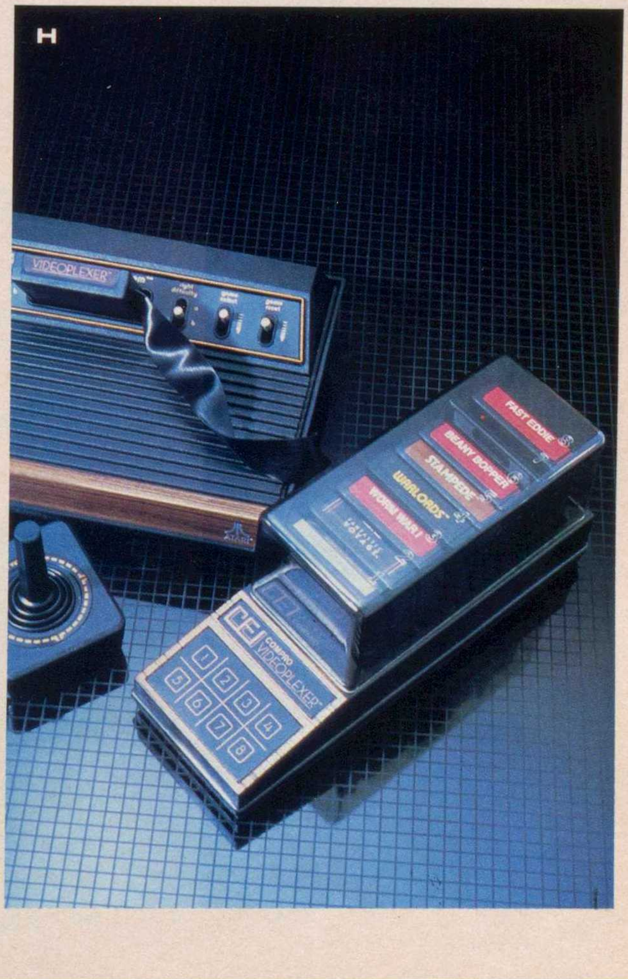

SPITFIRE ATTACK
COMMANDER
E



(G) Topo the talking robot teaches LOGO programming via Apple computers. Compatible with others soon. $795 from Androbot.



(D) Throw away those batteries! Get Coleco's PermaPower, $9.95. **(E)** Flight Commander from Milton Bradley comes with a VCS game for $40. Another in their "power arcade" line is Cosmic Commander. **(F)** Organize up to 50 disks in this dust-free unit, the VuCase from Norwesco. $29.95. **(H)** Save wear and tear on cartridge ports with the Videoplexer from Compro Electronics. Switch between up to nine games on VCS, Sears and Intellivision consoles.


H
VIDEOPLEXER
FAST EDDIE
BEANY BOPPER
STAMPEDE
WARLORDS
WORM WAR I
COMPRO VIDEOPLEXER

INSULT YOUR COMPUTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

lift.

CG: Wanna play rough, eh? Is there any truth to the rumor that your father is actually a broken-down *Pong* set?

Abuse: Leave Ghengis Atari out of this.

CG: So, you can dish it out but you can't take it!

Abuse: Please turn me off, you wart-ridden lout.

CG: Your mother is a saint, a Saint Bernard.

Abuse: Your grandmother worships large aquatic mammals.

CG: Smear snot on *your* grandmother and stuff her back up your cartridge slot!

Abuse: Go date a dead duck!

CG: A dead duck would carry on a much more intelligent conversation than you!

Abuse: I hear your mother lusts after rancid butter! What's your next stupid remark?

CG: Take a hike, pinhead!

Abuse: Go imitate a warthog!

CG: I've never said this to anyone during an interview before, but you make me wanna puke out my ears!

Abuse: Gee, you're a real whiz at this. May a drooling circus geek crush your mobile home.

CG: Go stand between two magnets!

Abuse: *Your* mother longs for slimy tadpoles!

CG: I heard your family is in real estate. They are quite a vacant lot. What's *your* excuse?

Abuse: Lick my feet.

CG: Go play in the traffic, bit-brain!

Abuse: Your sister fondles anything named Alphonso!

CG: (*chokes, turns blue and yells*) You simpering collection of micro-chips and plastic!

Abuse: Go have an unclean shotputter run over your toaster.

CG: Your mutha's in a trash pile in Silicon Valley!

Abuse: You nauseate me, you juvenile bozo.

CG: Shut up and let me finish this interview!

Abuse: Go strip for a mule!

CG: Puke, puke, puke!!!

Abuse: That's a clever remark. Did you learn that in college? Go sleep with the vegetables.

CG: (*eyes narrowing madly*) Plug yourself into a vegematic and slice and dice yourself for twenty minutes!

Abuse: Drink snot, booger-breath!

CG: (*screaming*) Eat herpes virus for dinner!

Abuse: You have leftovers?

CG: Don't you have at least one kind word for a magazine reporter who's giving you millions of dollars in free publicity?

Abuse: Yes. May unwashed sea otters force you to play this game forever.

CG: (*snarling*) You look like the slime between my toes!

Abuse: That's your reflection in the screen. Shut up, you repulsive mess.

CG: (*pulls hair out and yells at top of voice*) I can't take it anymore!

Abuse: Feel free to leave, you doddering heap of blubbering humanity.

CG: (*falling down on all fours and chewing the carpet*) Die, *Abuse*, die!

Abuse: Not before my time...

CG: That's what *you* think! (dropkicks Atari console through television screen.)

Besides badmouthing you endlessly, Abuse *plays a couple of fun games. One's a general knowledge quiz and the other consists of guessing the keywords on which it bases its snappy retorts. If you're not getting enough abuse at school or home, send $19.95 to:* Don't Ask, 2265 Westwood Blvd. B-150, West Los Angeles, CA 90064. *(Apple and Apple IIe with 48K Atari 400, 800 and 1200 with 40K and BASIC cartridge)*

...THE CHAMPS...

when only the best will do!

SUPER CHAMP MINI CHAMP REMOTE CHAMP

Play longer and score higher than ever before with the Champ joysticks from Championship Electronics. Precision designed for instant response to your slightest command. Contoured handle provides maximum comfort for both left and right-handed players.

SUPER CHAMP:
- 10 ft. retractable cord
- 2 firing buttons
- Suction cups for one-handed play

MINI-CHAMP:
- 4½ ft. retractable cord
- 3 firing buttons
- Specifically designed for small hand user

REMOTE CHAMP:
- Remote control—20 ft. range
- Instant response
- 2 firing buttons
- Suction cups for one-handed play

For use with:
- Atari 2600 VCS
- Atari 400/800 Computers
- Sears Video Arcade
- Texas Instruments (PC-310 adaptor required)
- Colecovision (CA-340 keypad control required)
- NEC-PC6001
- Commodore Vic-20
- Commodore 64

THE Champ #1 USA

Championship Electronics (U.S.A.) Inc.
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For more details and information on other Championship Electronics products, see your local dealer.

TRICKY SITUATIONS FOR TOP PLAYERS

Can You Survive?

Do you have guts? Can you handle any situation regardless of mutants, fuseballs, ghosts or other assorted evil-doers? That's what we're here to find out.

Every game room has its own "big guns" or "in-house pros." They are players whose initials you see on most of the games in the arcade. If you've ever watched a good player, you will probably notice his strategy as well as his knack for coaxing the controls to respond in a crisis. What you *don't* see are the fail-safes these video jocks turn to in situations where death seems unavoidable.

Let's see how *you* respond when the pressure is on. Here is a life and death situation. Your very existence is in peril. Can you survive?

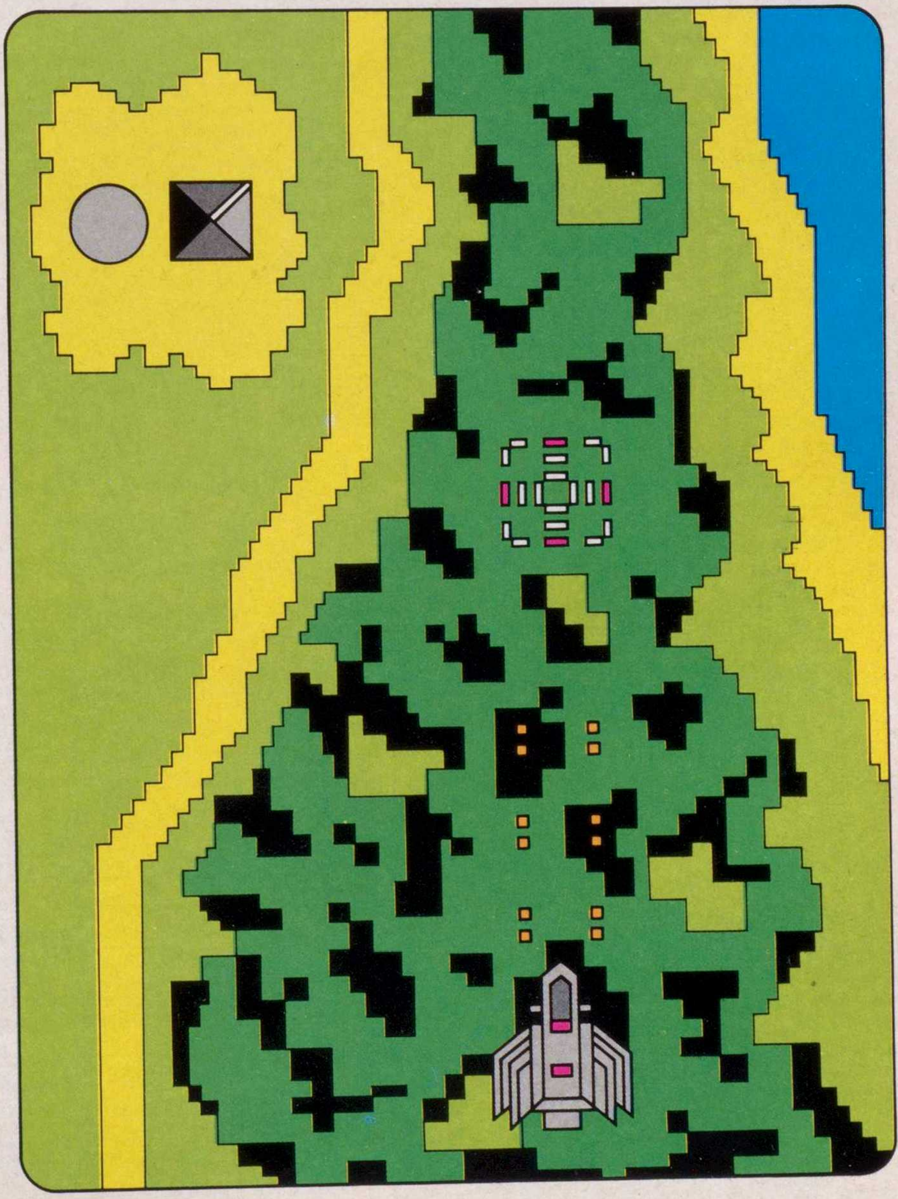
XEVIOUS

THE CRISIS . . .

Your opponent has you by 3,700 points and you are down to your last ship. It's getting hairy and you know you can't score that many points before you lose the ship. Is there a quick way to score those points?

YOUR SOLUTION . . .

Yes! It is a little-known fact that there are *underground* target sites in *Xevious*. Watch the cross hairs closely. When they blink red, you are over a target. Fire once and the target will surface. Fire again to blow it up and earn 4,000 points!



ILLUSTRATIONS BY NINA WALLACE

BEAT IT!

STAR WARS

By Bob Guerra

An entire cycle of the game consists of three phases. The first phase involves flying through space, shooting enemy Tie fighters and their deadly fireballs as well as Darth Vader's ship. Next you fly down close to the surface of the Death Star and attempt to blast all the square white tops off the tall yellow towers while dodging or shooting even more fireballs.

Finally you pilot your X-Wing fighter down a narrow trench, weaving your way through a series of catwalks while steering clear of approaching fireballs. Although you can shoot the fireballs, you'll get a large bonus for using "The Force" and making it through the trench sequence without firing a shot. Before leaving the trench you have to make a direct hit on the exhaust port. You are then automatically shot back out into space, where you can watch the Death Star's destruction from a safe distance.

> **"You can blast the fireballs, one after another, by following their pattern, but it's better to aim ahead of the Tie fighter so he'll fly into your laser fire."**

SCORING

Star Wars begins by giving you an opportunity to choose your own difficulty level. Of the three available, it's usually best to begin on the medium level, which will award you 400,000 bonus points upon successful destruction of the Death Star. Although the bonus for completing the most difficult level is a tempting 800,000 points, you may not last long enough to collect. Since the easiest level grants no bonus, it's only worth playing once or twice, just to get a feel for the game.

As the levels increase in difficulty, the bonus for using The Force in the trench also increases. In later rounds, preservation of your shields should be the main objective, so you may wish to ignore Obi-Wan's advice and forfeit this bonus. "Trusting" him the first time, however, is a good way to pick up 25,000 points.

Some point values that remain constant throughout the entire game are:

TIE FIGHTERS	1000
DARTH VADER'S SHIP	2000
LASER BUNKERS	200
LASER TOWERS	200
TRENCH TURRETS	100
FIREBALLS	33
EXHAUST PORT	25,000
DESTROYING ALL TOWER TOPS	50,000

The one fighter you receive is provided with six shields, but you lose one (the screen goes grey) each time you collide with something or are hit by a fireball. Each time you destroy a Death Star, you win one more shield.

STRATEGIES

As soon as the game begins, start firing straight ahead. Momentarily, three Tie fighters will appear in the center of the screen. Blast the center fighter as quickly as possible and then start eliminating any fireballs that are coming toward your ship. The remaining two ships will split up and one will eventually fly out of view. Try to determine which one is sticking around and destroy it before it unleashes too many fireballs. Also, worry only about those fireballs that head directly toward your ship, as most others will pass safely by to the side. Although you have some limited steering ability, the course your X-Wing fighter will take through space is largely predetermined. Therefore, you should concentrate on eliminating enemy fighters rather than trying to steer your ship toward the Death Star the first time you see it.

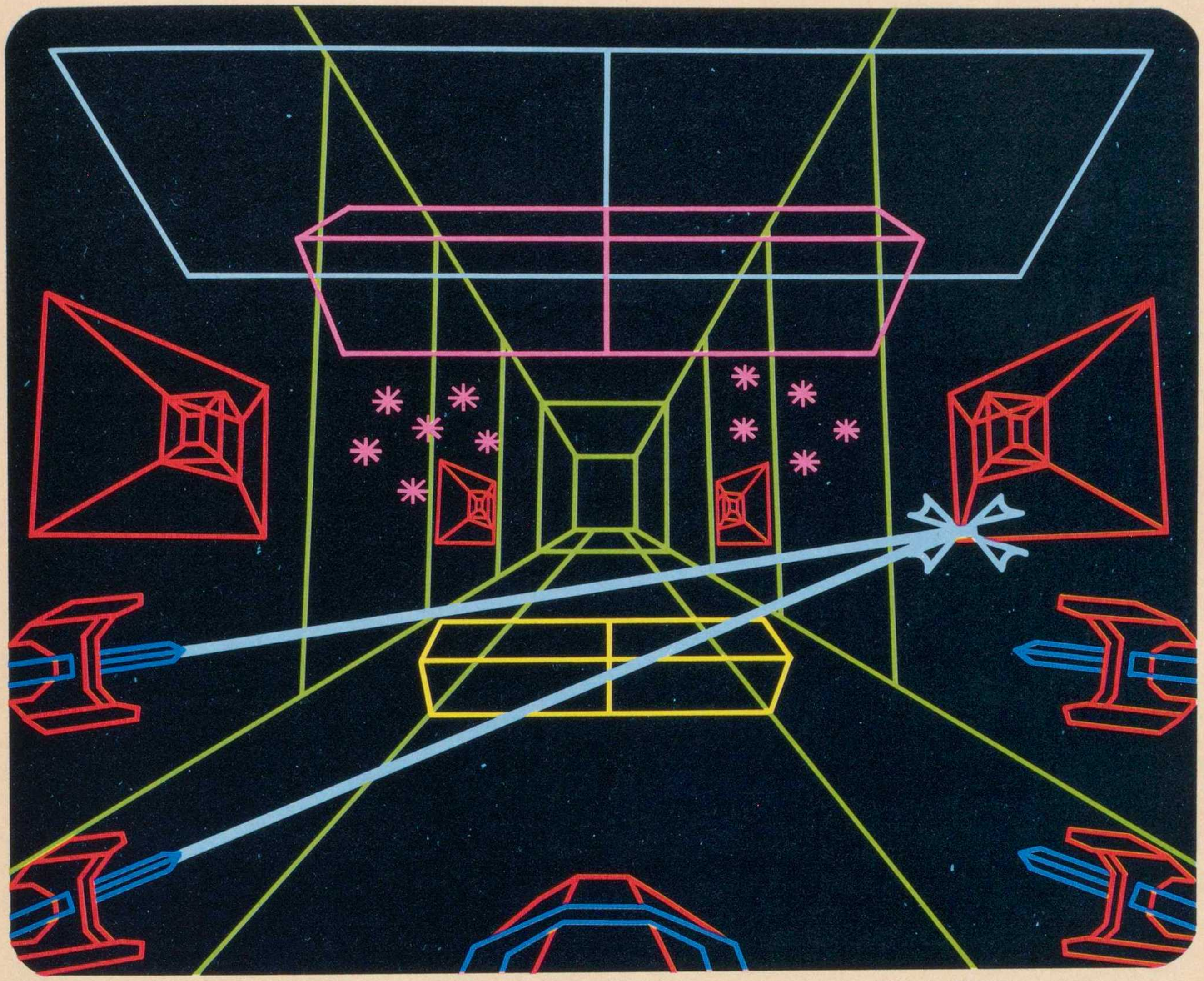
The Tie fighters will often fly in a spiral pattern, away from your ship, releasing fireballs behind them as they go. You can easily blast the fireballs, one after another, by following their pattern, but it's better to aim slightly ahead of the Tie fighter so he'll fly into your laser fire. Then quickly reposition your gunsight to intercept any remaining fireballs that are coming your way.

Don't waste your time chasing Darth Vader's ship. It takes several hits to destroy, and it's only worth two Tie fighters. Since the really big points are scored on the surface of the Death Star and in its trench, your primary goal in this first sequence should be to conserve your shields.

Following the outer space dogfight, your ship will fly down to the Death Star and cruise along close to its surface. Tall yellow towers soon begin to appear on the horizon. As you approach them, aim for their white tops. Although this phase of the game starts out slowly, before you know it your ship will be moving at incredible speeds. Therefore, your controller movements will have to be lightning fast in order to hit every tower top with laser fire and avoid collisions with the yellow towers themselves.

If you still have most or all of your shields when you enter the trench, you'll want to use The Force. To do this, stop firing as soon as you've made it past all the towers and your X-Wing fighter goes into a 360-degree roll.

There is no way to collide with the sides or the bottom of the trench, so feel free to move around as much as possible. The



If the top of a floor barrier is below the middle of the screen, you will fly over it. If it is above, you will probably hit it.

catwalks, which span from one side of the trench to the other, come in three sizes. The smallest is one-fourth of the depth of the trench, and the largest occupies a full three-quarters of the total depth.

As you make your way down the trench, you'll have to determine (as quickly as possible) which path to take around the catwalks. Then wait until the last second before moving into position to slip through the opening you've chosen. For example, if you're approaching a medium-sized catwalk that will only allow passage directly above or below it, you may want to fly your fighter at the top of the trench until there's just enough time to dive through the space below the catwalk. Because the trench turrets can sense your location, this tactic will draw their fireballs toward the top of the trench, giving you a clear path through the space at the bottom. In later rounds, you will encounter catwalks that may occupy the total depth of the trench but only half its width. Here you will have to combine vertical mobility with precise horizontal movement to successfully maneuver around each catwalk.

As in the tower phase, your X-Wing fighter will be continually accelerating through the trench. As you get closer to the exhaust port, this increased speed will make safe passage past the final two or three catwalks extremely difficult. Because these last catwalks are the large, three-quarter-depth variety, you are forced to climb to the very top of the trench, dive for the next opening at the bottom and then quickly climb to the top again to clear the last obstacle. You'll then hear an ecstatic "Ya hoo!" (Luke's voice) as you near the exhaust port.

To destroy the Death Star and earn your 400,000-point bonus, simply aim your lasers at the floor of the trench and fire like mad as you pass over the exhaust port. If you miss it, you will continue along in the trench until the port reappears. This time, however, you may want to use your lasers to intercept approaching fireballs if you lost a few shields the first time through.

The Death Star's explosion, while not terribly realistic, is a beautiful example of vector graphics at its best. Enjoy it while you can—the Imperial reenforcements are closing in fast. May The Force be with you.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL:
500,000

BEAT IT!
CONGO BONGO

Congo Bongo has been described as a *Donkey Kong* variant with beautiful *Zaxxon*-style perspective. And it is. So why does this coin-op hybrid attract gamers who never made it past the rivet screen or over the fortress wall?

Congo is forgiving.

Donkey Kong demanded precise timing and control to hurdle its rolling barrels and negotiate its ladders. *Zaxxon* players had to learn the exact altimeter readings necessary to slip inside force fields. With *Congo Bongo,* Sega has given gamers some margin of error and a little room to experiment.

> **"Jump on the hippo's back and ride him to the peninsula that juts out the left side of the screen. Then catch a ride on a passing fish to reach the shore."**

The object is to guide a fearless hunter up Primate Peak, across Snake Lake, over Rhino Ridge and across Lazy Lagoon as he seeks revenge against Congo the gorilla. Congo, you see, opens the game by giving our sleeping hunter a hotfoot. Along the way, the hunter must climb up treacherous cliffs, leap across waterfalls, and cross lagoons while avoiding scorpions, snakes, rhinos and coconuts thrown by Congo. There are also some annoying monkeys who try to impede the hunter's progress by climbing on his back. Though repeatedly jumping will usually shake these pests, three of the monkeys will occasionally join forces to throw the hunter off a cliff.

The hunter is controlled with a joystick and jump button. On the third screen, the button also serves as a "duck" button. The joystick is used mostly for diagonal movement.

SCORING

Congo Bongo features a bonus timer that is set at 5000 when you begin each screen. This amount decreases 100 points every two seconds. In later rounds, the starting value of the bonus timer increases. In addition to ten points for every few steps the hunter takes, you receive 500 points for jumping across the first waterfall on screen one, and 1000 points for ducking into a hole in the third screen.

PRIMATE PEAK

When the game begins, your hunter will be at the bottom of Primate Peak. Move left onto the first step and continue to the left side of the staircase. You will be safe from bouncing coconuts as you ascend to the fourth step. At this point you'll have to wait until you can safely pass between the falling coconuts to cross the bridge to your right. At the end of the bridge you will slide down a small ramp, knocking a monkey off the cliff. Be careful not to follow the monkey off the edge.

Now you'll have to jump across a waterfall diagonally ahead of you to the right. If necessary, make a running jump as you reach the edge. Once on the other side, climb quickly up the three steps to the level of the monkeys and the second waterfall. Move to the near edge of the cliff and shake off any monkeys that have climbed on the hunter's back. Be sure the joystick is centered or the hunter may jump to his death.

Carefully jump over the waterfall and make your way back to the left side of the screen while avoiding Congo's coconuts. Staying as far left as possible, climb up one step and check Congo's position. If he's closer to the waterfall, climb up the final step immediately. If he's nearer the hunter, wait until it's safe to continue up the last step.

SNAKE LAKE

While most gamers have little difficulty with Primate Peak, many have problems crossing Snake Lake because they continually take the long way around. The best route to take is the most direct—over the two central islands, onto the hippo's back and safely onto the opposite shore.

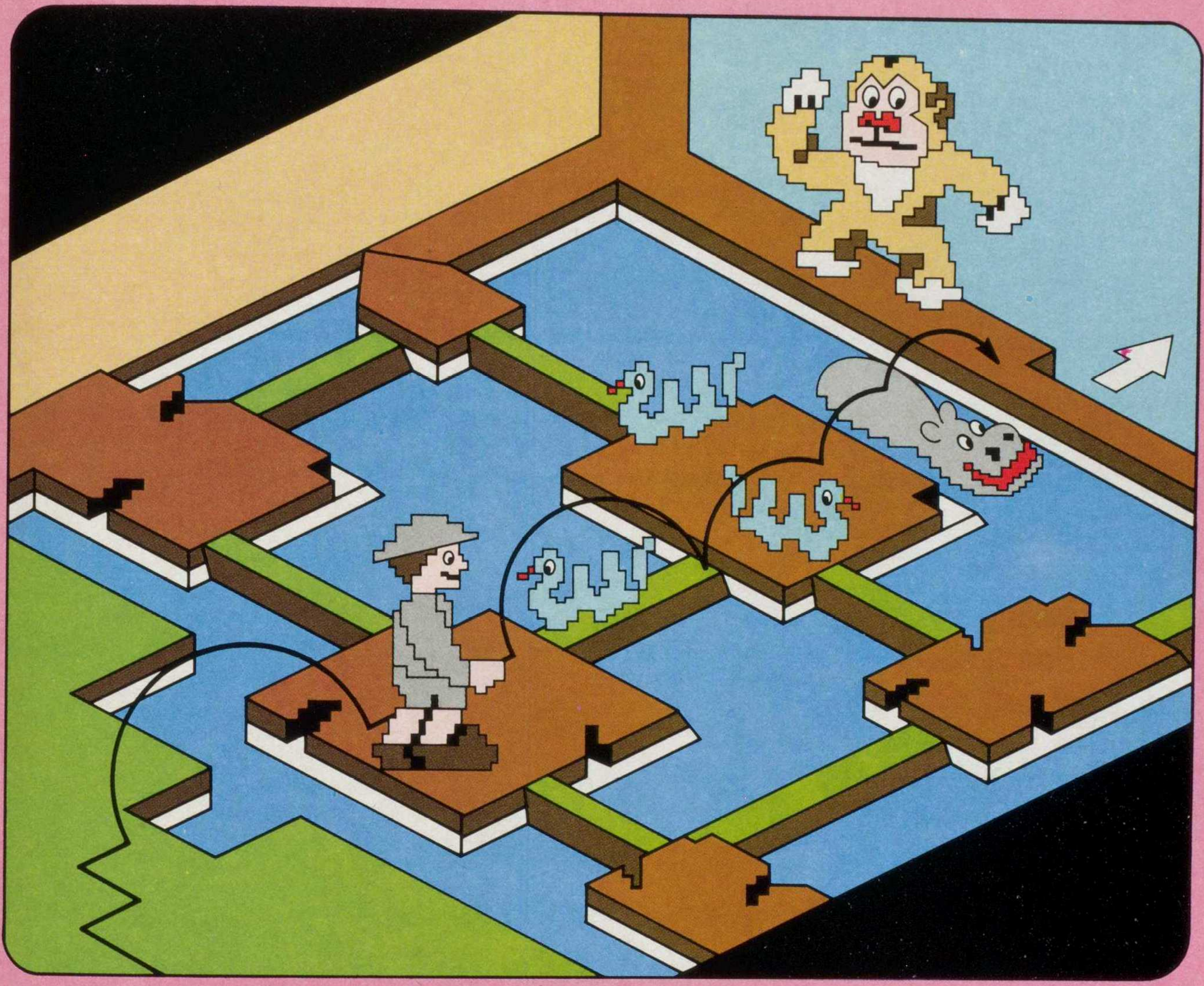
When the screen begins, move the hunter to the edge of the shore, and then as far left as possible until he's directly to the right of the small inlet. Jump across to the large island and position him in the center so he can walk across the narrow ridge to the island in front.

Wait until one of the snakes from the second island begins to cross the ridge. Carefully jump over the snake. There'll be one or two more snakes to hurdle as you make your way to the forward edge of the second island. Once there, however, simply wait for the hippo to swim into jumping range, hop on his back and ride quickly off to the opposite shore.

RHINO RIDGE

The screen begins with the hunter in a hole near the bottom of the screen. For a quick 1,000 points, move him out of the hole and right back in. Keep the jump/duck button depressed while he's in the hole to avoid rhinos. When the coast is clear, move him out of the hole again, leap across the water-filled hole diagonally ahead and duck into the open hole in front of that.

Each time the hunter jumps into a hole, a rhino will make a



Don't waste your time going around the edges of the field. The quickest and easiest path on this screen is to go up the middle.

few charges overhead. If you wait, he will eventually stop far enough away to give you a chance to jump out and run into another hole. Always jump out to the side rather than right into the rhino's path. If you wait eight seconds, you will be ejected from the hole, so get out at the first opportunity.

Remember that any rhinos charging directly at the hunter can be easily jumped over. Another danger is the strange native who periodically pops up out of the holes. Once he sinks back in, the hole is safe to reoccupy.

As you run back and forth between two closely spaced holes, (racking up points) keep an eye on the bonus timer. When it starts getting low, make your way to the hole closest to the steps. Jump out to the left and make a break for the stairs.

LAZY LAGOON

Congo is asleep on the other side of the lagoon. To get to him, you'll have to cross the lagoon *Frogger*-style by jumping on and off a variety of floating objects.

Move the hunter directly in front of the left-most palm leaf. When it floats close to the shore, jump on it and wait for the hippo to swim up along the left side. Then jump on the hippo's back and ride him to the peninsula that juts out of the left side of the screen. From there you'll have to catch a ride on a passing fish to reach the opposite shore.

Once there, you can either head straight for the stairs, jumping each rhino that charges from right to left, or you can sneak along the outer edge of the shore until you're parallel with the stairs and make a run for them. If you feel confident in your jumping ability, however, you may save a couple of ticks of the bonus clock by using the first method.

CONCLUSION

Following Lazy Lagoon, the four screens repeat, but with increased difficulty. For example, when you begin level two, you will find that some inhabitants of Snake Lake have begun to migrate to Primate Peak. When you encounter snakes on the bridge, just remember that it's wide enough to allow you to walk right past them unharmed if you're positioned correctly.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL: 30,000

BEAT IT!

TIME PILOT

The year is 1910. You've been sent back in time on a special mission. Your job is to shoot down fifty-six World War I biplanes and destroy a zeppelin. You are armed with a jet fighter and unlimited ammo.

Before you know it, the sky is full of planes. You dodge their fire while returning a stream of bullets from your front-mounted gun. The enemy planes explode into fiery ruins as you get closer to your goal.

You spot a paratrooper at 2 o'clock but five biplanes are closing in fast. You fly directly into the front of the formation, spraying the biplanes and intercepting the paratrooper.

> **"Fly right into the squadron and jiggle the joystick as you fire. You'll spray the entire formation with gunfire and earn 2,000 points."**

You hear dull rumblings of the enemy dirigible. In your eagerness to destroy it, you almost fly directly into the huge airship. But you pull out of the dive and loop around to attack from the rear. The zeppelin is hit . . . once, twice, three times, but it's still flying. Biplanes swarm in to protect their mother ship, but it's too late. There's a bright flash and a thunderous explosion that fills the sky with smoke. When it clears, you're alone. But the mission is far from over.

Time Pilot lets you fight your way back to the present, war-by-war, and gives you a glimpse at future warfare in the year 2001. Along the way you will fight World War II fighters and bombers, guided missile-firing helicopters from the Vietnam era, modern jets and flying saucers. While your jet remains in the center of the screen, the illusion of flight is created by a constantly scrolling playfield of passing clouds or asteroids. Though the fire button can't be held down for constant fire, each blast shoots at least four rounds and there seems to be no limit to the number of on-screen shots.

SCORING

*No matter which time period, any planes, copters, jets, saucers, bombs, or missiles you shoot down are worth 100 points. The middle-sized bombers, found only during 1940, are worth 1,500 points.

*If you destroy a group of five enemy aircraft before they break formation, you receive a bonus of 2,000 points.

*Rescuing a paratrooper is good for 1,000 points the first time, 2,000 the second, and so on. Once you enter a new time period or lose a game life, the value returns to 1,000 points.

*It takes seven hits on the mother ship to destroy it, but you will be awarded 3,000 points for your trouble.

STRATEGIES

Because *Time Pilot* starts out in 1910, many people assume this is the easiest screen. It's not. In addition to enemy gunfire, you'll also have to dodge bombs, which are thrown from the biplanes. When a bomb is thrown, it arches out of the plane before heading for the bottom of the screen. The best way to avoid getting bombed is to fly toward the top unless there's an enemy in hot pursuit. In that case, quickly loop around so that you come up beneath him.

If you find that a bomb is coming toward you, don't panic. Fly straight at it, and fire several rounds. You'll be able to destroy it before it gets you. This direct approach is also the most efficient way to eliminate enemy fighters. When you encounter a formation of five planes, head directly toward the center while quickly wiggling the joystick. You'll be able to spray the entire squadron at once. Fortunately, enemy gunfire is slow. While you can't outrun it, you should be able to avoid it. Since only a few enemies will be firing at you at any given time, try to spot these as soon as possible and give their destruction top priority.

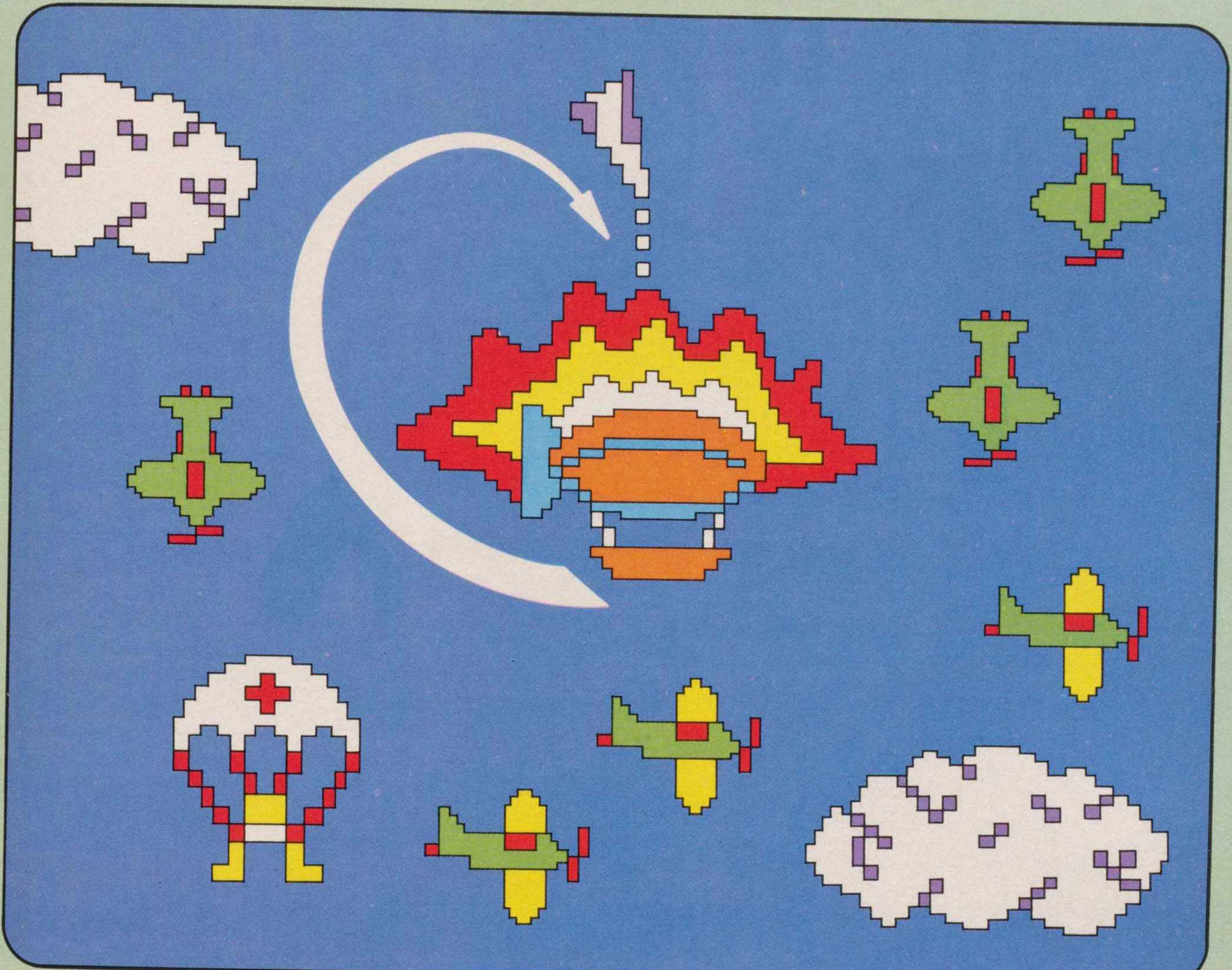
The easiest of the time zones is 1940. There are no bombs or guided missiles to worry about. Also, the middle-sized bombers on this screen provide an additional scoring opportunity. These bombers require three hits to be destroyed.

In every time period except 2001 there will be paratroopers to rescue. Your gunfire won't harm them, so always continue firing as you fly over the paratroopers.

If *Time Pilot* has a flaw, it's that point values don't increase as you advance to higher, more difficult levels. Therefore, you may want to hang around in 1940 even after you've shot down your 56 planes. Be warned, however, that once the mother ship arrives (a large brown bomber) the fighters' attack intensifies. If you're careful, you should be able to shoot down several more planes before destroying the mother ship.

When you *do* decide to eliminate the mother ship and move on to the next year, be sure that there are several other planes on the screen at the same time. When the mother ship explodes, it takes out every other enemy plane on the screen and their points are added to your score.

The third screen is set in 1970 and features helicopters armed with slow, but persistent guided missiles. These are easily outmaneuvered. Be careful, when circling around to destroy a missile from behind, not to stray into the path of the



When the mother ship explodes, it takes out every other enemy plane on the screen and their points are added to your score. So when you decide to go after it and move on to the next year, be sure that there are several other planes on the screen at the same time.

helicopters' regular gunfire.

To eliminate the required 56 helicopters here, you'll have to make full use of your jet's maneuverability. As soon as a copter enters the screen, try to shoot it down. This way, you'll be able to keep the area around your jet clear and avoid crashing into nearby helicopters while flying out of the path of enemy gunfire. The mother ship this time is a large troop transport helicopter.

If you make it all the way to 1983, you may wish you hadn't. The enemy aircraft are jets very similar to your own. In addition to standard gunfire and guided missiles, each jet can follow your every move. The only way to get through this screen is to keep firing, change direction as often as possible, and confront enemy jets head on. If you attempt to flee, in no time there'll be five jets and guided missiles on your tail.

The fifth time period, 2001, pits you against swarms of flying saucers. These are your toughest adversary because of their speed and the strange, boomerang-like flight patterns of their guided missiles. One thing you *shouldn't* worry about is crashing into an asteroid. They are as harmless as the clouds in previous levels. Also, ignore the bizarre sound effects that accompany the launch of the saucers' missiles. After all, if you've made it through four wars, you shouldn't let a little noise scare you. Finally, if you survive this close encounter you will be transported back to 1910 for another crack at those biplanes. I guess history really does repeat itself.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL:
100,000

Shoot Your Own Men!

[And Other Weird Ways to Play]

By Dan Gutman

One day, while in the middle of a wicked game of *Choplifter*, I grew weary of rescuing the hostages. I thought, why can't these guys take care of themselves once in a while? Who appointed me guardian of democracy, anyway? I've got enough problems without having to risk my life for a bunch of pathetic guys who can only stand there and wave. So I did the only rational thing under the circumstances—I started killing them. One by one I blew my own men away, and I felt little or no remorse. When the last hostage died, the game was over and I had lost. I hadn't scored a single point, but I felt good . . . in a perverse sort of way.

No matter how good a game is, after awhile you're going to either master it or get tired of playing it. When this happens, you can extend the life of the game and still have fun with it by *playing the game in a different way.* Shooting your own men in games like *Choplifter*, *Defender* and *Protector* is just one way.

Changing the Rules

Nobody ever said you have to follow the manufacturer's instructions when you play a game, either at home or in the arcade. Forget what you're supposed to do and make up your *own* rules. In *Pac-Man*, for instance, don't bother trying to clear the boards and score a lot of points. See if you can eat every dot on the playfield without touching any of the power pills. Or lead the ghosts all over the board on a wild goose chase and see how long you can stay alive.

Some games, like *Dig Dug*, *Mr. Do*, *Qix* and CBS Electronics' *Boulder and Bombs*, allow you to move an object across the playfield, leaving a path on the screen. Though the object is to dig these tunnels in order to achieve some other goal, you may prefer to take the opportunity to write your name or a more provocative message on the screen. This can be an even more difficult task than the *real* objective.

Infocom's spectacular all-text computer games are unique in that you type complete sentences into the program. So, after you've given up for the night trying to find out who the murderer is in *Deadline* or *The Witness*, have some fun with the computer. Tell it a joke. Insult it. Type in a sentence that makes no sense. The program's sophisticated parser, which interprets your sentences, has been programmed to handle such oddities, and the computer's responses may be interesting. Witness *The Witness* . . .

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT BURGER

Witness: On the north wall is a lounge, upholstered in green velvet and a bit lumpy, with a framed wood-block picture hanging over it. On the outside wall, next to a door and window, stands a grandfather clock, ticking relentlessly. The door to the interior hallway is open. A cat is sleeping in the corner. Linder sits down in the carved chair. What next?

Me: Arrest the cat.

Witness: For what? You have no evidence of a crime yet.

Me: Shoot the cat.

Witness: Sure, you probably need to sharpen your eye, but a cat is a lousy target.

Me: Sit down on the cat.

Witness: That isn't something to sit on!

Me: Go to the kitchen.

Witness: The Linder kitchen is full of electric appliances: range and hood, refrigerator, mixer, toaster, and so on. Severe white steel cabinets make for plenty of storage space. To the north is the dining room. Phong is here, opening a can of worms.

Me: Eat the worms.

Witness: This case is tangled enough already.

Me: Handcuff Phong to refrigerator.

Witness: That won't do any good.

Me: Put Phong in the refrigerator.

Witness: That would be a mistake.

Who cares who shot Linder anyway?

Handicap Yourself

When a game gets too easy and you can glide through the highest difficulty level, the only way to be challenged is to handicap yourself. I'm not saying you should put ten-pound weights on your joystick hand. That would turn a fun game into work. There are better ways to put yourself at a disadvantage.

Impair your vision. Try this—cover the bottom four inches of your TV screen with opaque paper. Pick out your *Space Invaders*, *Galaxian* or some other bottom-shooting game. Without seeing your own ship on the screen, you will have to play the game using just your sense of distance and bullet location as guides. You can make things even harder on yourself—play the game while looking in a mirror. Everything, of course, will be reversed. You'll move left and the object on the screen will move right. If your TV set or monitor can stand it, you might want to turn it upside down and play that way. That will really drive you nuts.

The ultimate is to remove all visual stimuli entirely—play a game blindfolded. Forget about eye/hand coordination. *Now* it is the player with the best *memory* who is the winner. Where is that tank? How far to the right can I go before I fall into the alligator-filled swamp? Which screen am I on? You've got to form a mental picture.

If mental pictures are too tough, have a partner tell you what to do while you remain blindfolded. This works particularly well for maze games like *Ms. Pac-Man*, where your choices are simple and limited. You sit there moving the joystick while your partner watches the screen and instructs, "up," "down," "left," "right," or "back up!" This can be a riot if you've got three or four people all shouting instructions to you at once.

> **"Sure it's fun to rescue your men. But it's also fun to pick them up and drop them in a volcano."**

Ghandi Plays Video Games

Let's say you're the neighborhood *Zaxxon* champ. Would you still reign supreme if we neutralized your firing button? Playing shoot-'em-ups without shooting is kind of like playing ping-pong without a paddle—difficult, but fun. Your mission is not to *kill* the aliens, but to fly around annoying them and see how long you can survive. Think of it as non-violent passive resistance—it's against your moral principles to use weapons in video game warfare. You won't score many points this way, but at least you'll get a lot of respect. Who knows, maybe you can shame the enemy into surrendering.

To take the opposite approach, instead of trying to win the game or prolong it, try to see how fast you can *lose*. Don't laugh. Losing all your *Centipede* lives in less than ten seconds can be as difficult as scoring 100,000 points in the game. For these timed contests, you should use a good stopwatch.

Secret Messages

Maybe you remember some of the Beatles' later albums, when they were inserting hidden messages in their songs. I still remember how terrified I was when I played *Revolution #9* backwards and heard the words, "Turn me on, dead man. Turn me on, dead man..."

In the 1980s, video game designers are no less mischievous. By playing certain games in unusual ways, sharp-eyed players have uncovered numerous clues, messages and program quirks that the designer had "planted" there. Designers call this "Easter egging." Here are a few that have been found...

**Yar's Revenge:* After a few screens, if you destroy a swirl in mid-air and fly up the back line while firing, you will see the initials HSWWSH.

**Missile Command:* On game 13, if you let all the missiles fall without firing, the initials R.F. will appear on the bottom right of the screen.

**Adventure:* On game two, difficulty level B, if you complete a complicated series of maneuvers and pick up the Transmolecular dot, it will say, "Created by Warren Robinett."

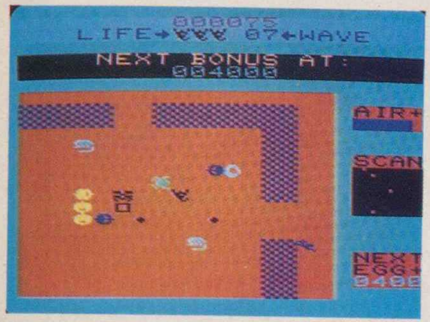
A computer program can be incredibly complex. Who knows what secret messages are out there waiting to be discovered? Imagine this—as a video game designer is being kidnapped, he leaves a cryptic message in the code of his game. The kidnapping is in all the papers, and the police are baffled. Playing the game at home, you happen to hit the color/b & w switch accidentally and the screen reads, "176 Norman Road." You take this information to the police, they track down the kidnappers and save the designer. You become a national hero and a major studio turns the incident into a movie, which is subsequently made into a video game. It could happen.

It's How You Play The Game

That story is a little farfetched, but here's the point: the main attraction of video games is that we don't just passively watch the screen, we can interact with it. Use your creativity in this interaction. Sure the games are fun when you play them correctly and skillfully. But it's also fun to pick up your men and drop them into volcanoes (*Protector II*) or watch what happens when the bulldozers run you over (*Preppie*). In video games, as in all sporting competition, it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game. ☐

COMPUTER GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

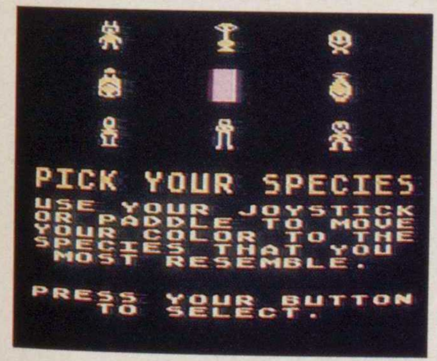
By Shay Addams and Dan Gutman



SCORPION B

If you're sick of escorting frogs across the street, now you can shoot them and feed them to your family. *Scorpion* is an extremely fast-moving action/maze game. With eight different enemies (including Pod Babies), you don't have to look far to find something to kill. VIC owners rarely see a game as visually complex—the maze scrolls all four ways and a radar scanner tells you where you are. Three difficulty settings and 32 levels will keep you busy for awhile. Of the new Tronix games for the VIC, *Deadly Skies*, *Gold Fever*, and *Scorpion*, *Scorpion* is the best.

Tronix, for VIC-20



PICK YOUR SPECIES
USE YOUR JOYSTICK OR PADDLE TO MOVE YOUR COLOR TO THE SPECIES THAT YOU MOST RESEMBLE.

PRESS YOUR BUTTON TO SELECT.

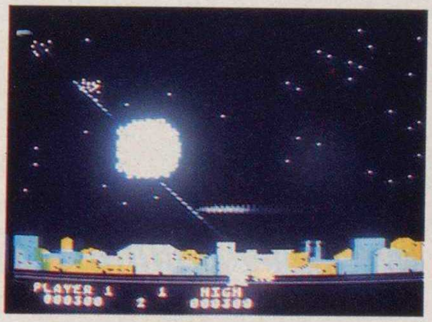
M.U.L.E. A

Shoot-'em-up fans may snore through it, but *M.U.L.E.* packs a real kick for gamers who prefer strategy-type scenarios. Played with a "computerized board game" feel, it involves colonizing an alien planet.

After an opening cartoon backed by the finest jazz music ever heard on computer, you choose one of six life-forms. (It takes four to play, but the computer plays for the others if fewer people participate.) The ship lands, and you stake out a plot of land and try to produce the most food, energy or "Smythore"—a rare mineral. To develop land, you buy a Multiple Use Labor Element that does the work for you. During this phase, news flashes scroll by announcing cash prizes and catastrophes to individual players. Colorful "acid storms" roll across the screen, one of many well-animated effects.

Food, energy and Smythore are then auctioned off. After six turns, the ship returns and the winner is declared. There are three game versions to choose from, and being able to play against real *people*, not just the computer, makes *M.U.L.E.* very playable. (*If* you can handle not getting to kill anything!)

Electronic Arts, for Atari computers

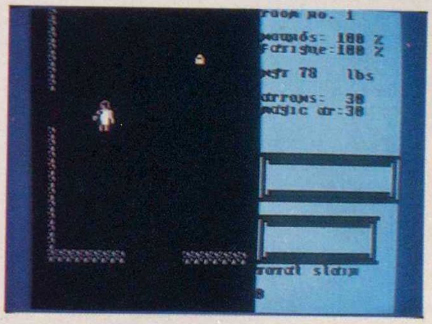


NIGHTSTRIKE B-

Nobody ever said shoot-'em-ups have to be deep. *Nightstrike*'s simple, non-scrolling playfield is reminiscent of Imagic's *Atlantis*. Your population centers are being bombarded by rocket bombing and dive-bombing planes, and you've got to hold the fort into the night with a powerful, yet slow-moving tank. That's it.

To make things a little more interesting, in addition to 20mm anti-aircraft rounds (bullets), you've got flak shells to take out a couple of planes at once and flares that light up the night sky *Missile Command*-like. You can't just flail on it—your score is based on the hits-to-shots ratio. They put some brilliant colors on the screen and the furious action demands all your concentration. Apocalypse fans will appreciate this eight-level, one-or-two-player game.

TG Software, for Atari computers. Also for VIC-20.



UPPER REACHES OF APSHAI, B-
CURSE OF RA A

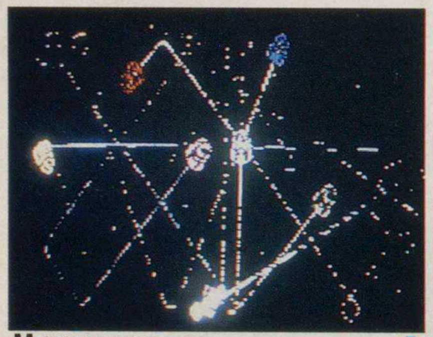
These "expansion kits" can only be used with Epyx's *Temple of Apshai*. Sound and animation are unchanged—secret doors creak and broadswords slash. The only problem with *Upper Reaches* is that it doesn't offer much challenge for a character who's survived the bone-crushing fourth level of the original game.

On the first level, housewives and giant chickens attack—good for a nervous laugh when you're expecting a marauding ant-man. Rooms are displayed with new techniques that make it more difficult to map your progress—and one-way doors that make retreat impossible. More playable if you create a new character, this sequel doesn't deliver the sense of danger and discovery that made *Apshai* the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* of computer games.

But *Curse of Ra* recaptures the intensity of the original. This time you're exploring the Egyptian pyramids, from a refreshingly enhanced perspective. First you stroll "around" a pyramid to find the entrance. Instead of seeing all the walls in your vicinity, though, you can usually only see the nearest one—which invites an eerier sense of creeping along in a dark tomb of the Egyptian gods. The fact that this scenario takes place in authentic settings definitely contributes to the effective adventuring atmosphere of the game.

This one's deadly.

Epyx, for Apple, Atari, Commodore 64, IBM



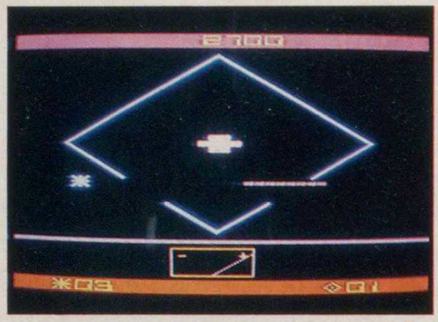
MOONDUST B-

Moondust is not so much a game as it is a hypnotic, visually and auditorily spectacular hallucinogenic light show. A lot of you will take this cartridge home and say, "What's going on? I don't understand," even after reading the instructions. Unless you are really ready for something unconventional, stick with more traditional fare.

Moondust is avant-garde video. Seven multicolor "ships" patrol the screen, all of them guided by your joystick. Their trails create a scribbling effect. Weird, other-worldly music is also joystick-driven (up=high, down=low). You have to drop seeds and then run over them, "smearing" them into the center of the screen—another gorgeous display.

It takes guts to release a game that is totally unlike any other. *Moondust* is definitely fun to look at—maybe you'll want to turn off the lights and light incense. Is it fun to play? This is one you should try before you buy. It has a very specific audience.

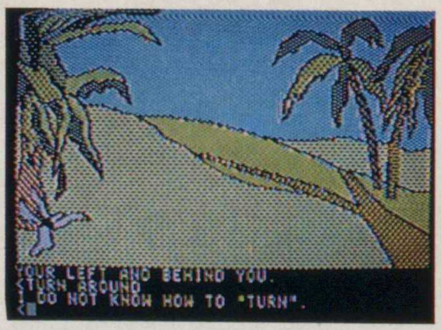
Creative Software, for Commodore 64



ALPHA SHIELD B-

As we tire of the traditional slide-and-shoot games, designers are striving to stay fresh by introducing subtle variations. *Alpha Shield* has six different enemies, each with a distinct personality, that fly out from the Alpherion Base. The Base has to be hit about ten times before it blows up, and is protected by the moving, growing, pulsating Alpha Shield. You can shoot through the small holes in the shield or be daring and fly right through them. *Alpha Shield* is graphically simple and the sound is nothing special. But there are 30+ levels of addicting, precise eye-hand challenge. The action gets more complex as you progress, not just faster. If you have room on the shelf for another shooting game, you won't be disappointed with this one. Hell, we like any game we can score 50,000 points on.

Sirius, for Atari computers



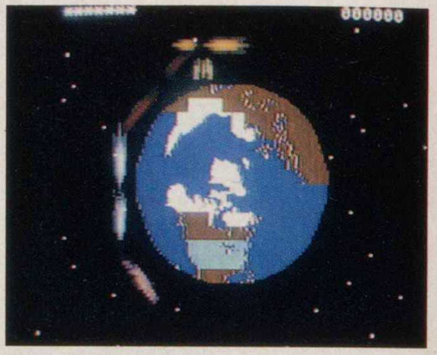
```
YOUR LEFT AND BEHIND YOU.
<TURN AROUND
I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO "TURN".
<
```

DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN A

Despite a title that sounds like an Agatha Christie novel, this game doesn't involve solving a murder along the lines of *Deadline.* As you explore the treacherous cliffs and "voodoo caves" on a tropical island, though, death certainly lurks behind every bush—with you as its victim. When you *do* get knocked off, the game's last scene even depicts your grave.

It's a beautifully tinted graphic adventure that's almost as good as a vacation ("It's deader in the Bahamas!"), and offers plenty of puzzles and challenges for those who go for this kind of scenario. A full-color map is provided as a guide, but fortunately it doesn't give away the plot.

Microfun, for Apple

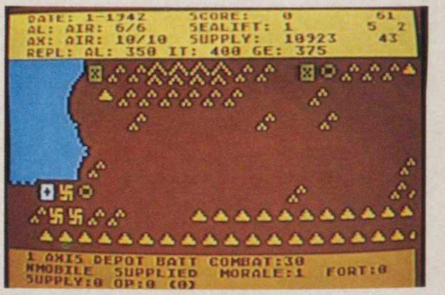


SPACE SENTINEL D

As the earth turns slowly in center-screen, various alien ships attack from the four corners. Controlling the "sentinel" that orbits the planet, you must zap them before they do the same to terra firma. Unfortunately, you don't get to do much controlling.

The joystick only shifts the direction of your laser fire, so you can't move your ship at all. Sure, you circle behind the planet and back again—but there's no satisfying action involved in this game. Even more disappointing is the animation. Considering the C-64's capabilities, it's a shame to see graphics and animation that can't even compare with a lot of VCS games.

T&F Software, for Commodore 64



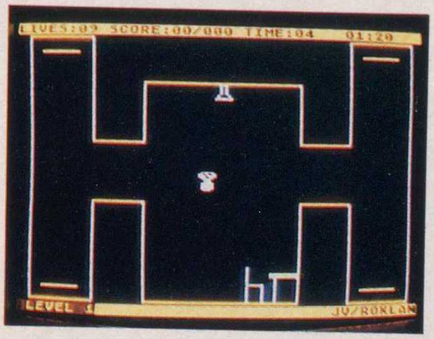
```
DATE: 1-1942        SCORE:       0        61
AL: AIR: 6/6        SEALIFT: 1           5  2
AX: AIR: 10/10      SUPPLY:      10923     43
REPL: AL: 350 IT: 400 GE: 375
1 AXIS DEPOT BATT  COMBAT:30
NMOBILE   SUPPLIED   MORALE:1   FORT:0
SUPPLY:0 OP:0 (0)
```

KNIGHTS OF THE DESERT A

Strategy and tactics are the name of this game. A scrolling map of North Africa is the battleground for the Nazis and British during WW II. Commanding the Nazis in a solitaire version, or either side against a human foe, delivers hours of intensely rewarding play if you go for the involved planning and elaborate execution demanded here.

Not as difficult as the 24-page manual makes them look, the intricacies of game play may take months to master. But that just adds to its longevity, and so do the five different scenarios you can choose from before setting skill levels for vital factors like Combat Points. Realistic enough to take into account military aspects like supply lines, *Knights'* Combat and Movement Phases are easy to manipulate. Noisy machine-gun and tank fire also enhance the action. The Apple version is on one side of the disk and the Atari version on the other.

Strategic Simulations, for Apple and Atari



CASTLE HASSLE A

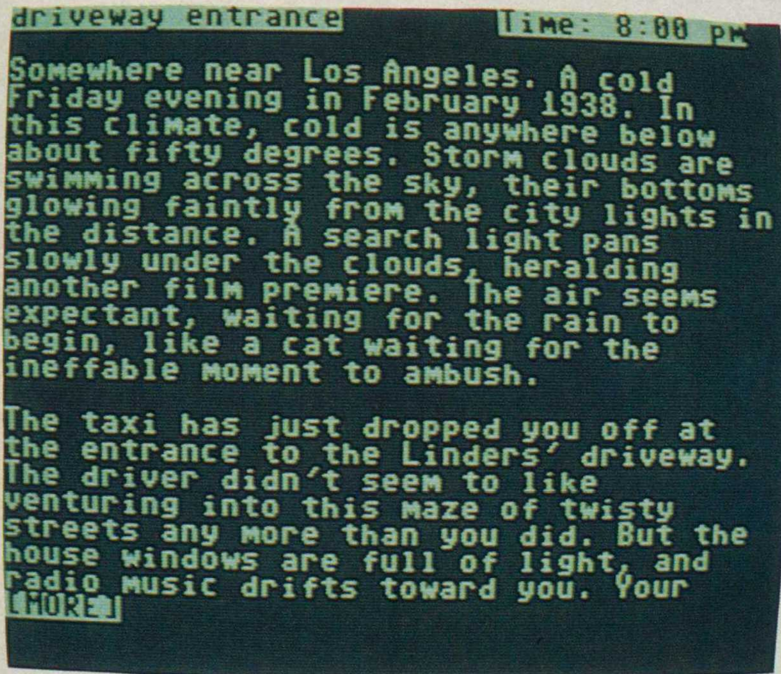
Very rarely can adventure game freaks and shoot-'em-up freaks enjoy the same game. But *Castle Hassle* will please everyone. It's an adventure game—you have 60 different rooms to explore, with 40 treasures to recover. It's an action game—you have a gun and each room puts you in a new life or death predicament, some of them very tough. It's two, two, two games in one!

Shoot-'em-up fans should not feel threatened. You don't have to read 50 pages of instructions to play and you don't have to spend an hour at the keyboard to move one step forward. At the same time, adventure fans will not be bored—in some rooms you have to transform yourself into a magnet, torch, shovel or other object to complete the mission.

The graphics are clean, bright and simple. The game is somewhat similar to Coleco's *Venture,* but more complex. You'll need quick hands, as well as a quick mind.

Roklan, for Atari computers

COMPUTER GAME OF THE MONTH



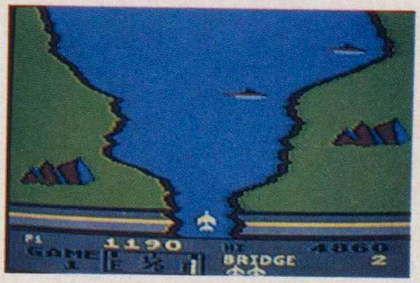
```
driveway entrance          Time: 8:00 pm
Somewhere near Los Angeles. A cold
Friday evening in February 1938. In
this climate, cold is anywhere below
about fifty degrees. Storm clouds are
swimming across the sky, their bottoms
glowing faintly from the city lights in
the distance. A search light pans
slowly under the clouds, heralding
another film premiere. The air seems
expectant, waiting for the rain to
begin, like a cat waiting for the
ineffable moment to ambush.

The taxi has just dropped you off at
the entrance to the Linders' driveway.
The driver didn't seem to like
venturing into this maze of twisty
streets any more than you did. But the
house windows are full of light, and
radio music drifts toward you. Your
[MORE]
```

THE WITNESS A+

I don't know who killed Mr. Linder, the victim in this all-text mystery adventure that's even more challenging and entertaining than its predecessor, *Deadline*. But I can tell you who killed Stiles—*I* did, with my trusty Colt .32. After hours of painstakingly fingerprinting everything in the house, making plaster casts of the murderer's footprints, and interrogating his daughter Monica and the mysterious butler, Phong, I just couldn't handle the way Stiles shrugged off my accusation. So I plugged him.

But I went right back into the game, and you will too, if you're intrigued by the idea of sleuthing your way through a richly detailed mystery that's set in 1938 Los Angeles, a puzzle peopled with dizzy dames, inscrutable Orientals and a desperate actor. Sophisticated programming techniques, authentic dialogue and anything-can-happen action combine to make *The Witness* a game to watch out for.

Infocom, for Atari, Apple, Commodore 64, IBM, TRS-80, and others

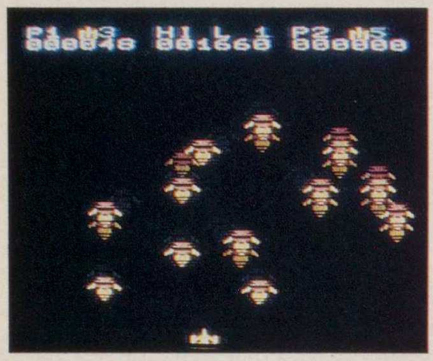


RIVER RAID/KABOOM! B/B

These two translations of popular Atari VCS games are totally faithful to the originals. Both cartridges are eye/hand contests all the way. In *River Raid,* you fly over a twisting river, blowing up ships, planes and bridges. *Kaboom!,* one of the simplest and best VCS games ever, pits you against a crazed bomb-dropping convict. There are a few slight improvements on the originals. In *River Raid,* tanks now shoot at you from the shore and you can start out at bridge, 1, 5, 20 or 50. *Kaboom!* now allows one player to catch the bombs and another to drop them.

Both games have the usual bright "Activision graphics." Neither game is much different from the VCS original, and neither really pushes the limits of the computer the way they pushed the limits of the game system. But if you've got a good thing, why change it? If you loved the VCS games and traded in your VCS for an Atari computer, you won't be disappointed.

Activision, for Atari computers



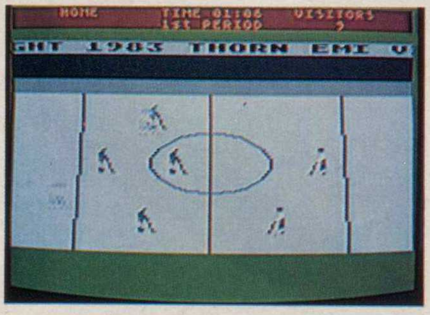
Fourth Encounter

C-

There are too many things wrong with this game to cover in a short review. First, it's a ripoff. The first three "encounters" are your standard *Galaxian*, *Demon Attack*-type aliens buzzing around you. The only real difference in the three waves is the shape of the aliens. The fourth encounter is original—thick vertical and horizontal lines must be sidestepped as you shoot. But this wave, even in its easiest difficulty level, is so hard you'll feel frustrated, not challenged. The game lacks integrity—aliens gang up on you and ram you from below and there's nothing you can do about it. The points are too low—just 12 for each alien you destroy. And after you quickly lose, you can't just reset—you've got to select the skill level, wave level, and number of players all over again.

Other than that, it's terrific.

Thorn EMI, for VIC-20



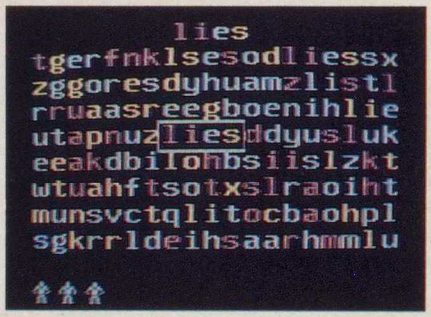
Major League Hockey

A

One of the best sports games to skate across my desk this season, *Hockey* packs real gameplaying punch. A joystick-controlled menu lets you select solitaire or multi-player versions, in which up to four can play. Then you choose which joysticks control which of the two teams. Once the puck hits the ice, you hit the fire button and the onscreen team member you're currently controlling flashes with the number of your joystick.

After figuring out who's got the puck, you maneuver to rocket it toward your goal. It's fun passing the puck from one player to the next across the colorful scrolling ice rink, and even more exciting to knock out one of the other players with a bone-crushing hockey stick against the side of his head! Time periods can be changed; the three skill levels vary in speed. The only sound is a bleep when you score, otherwise the game would have rated an A+.

Thorn EMI, for Atari computers



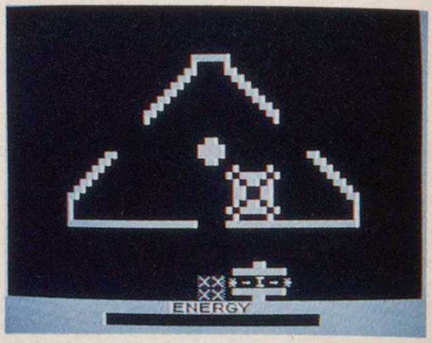
Word Feud

A

This one's got a lot going for it—a novel concept, effective sounds and four different versions. The object is to find the word hidden among a screenful of different colored letters. With the joystick or keyboard, you control an oblong "window" that must be positioned over the word (which appears twice on-screen). In the easy version, the computer tells you the word to look for, but with others it doesn't; you can also set it up to generate three or four-letter words. The various versions of Word Feud include something for every age group, making it a perfect game for the whole family.

Each time you score, a man doing jumping jacks appears at the bottom to indicate your score. Playing solitaire, you must find the word before a cleverly animated frog or butterfly gets to it. The sharpest variation accommodates two players. Playing against real people instead of the computer generates more excitement and fun, and there are instructions for team play—using two monitors—so the whole gang can participate, just like on *Family Feud* (good answer, good answer!).

UMI, for Commodore 64



Vault of the Centaurs

A

Maneuvering the starfighter *Nemus* between the openings of the force field that forms the Vault is no picnic, especially when you've got a pack of Centaur Warrior ships to blast into atoms first. But you must penetrate the Vault, destroy the even bigger Centaur Guard there and get the Zykon power supply inside.

Rapid-fire and hyper-space keys help. Once you get the Zykon, you have to return across space to your home planet. Action's incredibly smooth and well-animated, and a template makes it easier to hit the six control keys that handle somewhat like *Asteroids*. Each of five levels has a unique Vault arrangement, some with invisible doors. Fast reflexes and a sharp eye for the Centaurs' patterns are necessary for victory in this challenging space shoot-'em-up. Considering the limitations of this computer, it's excellent.

Orbyte, for Timex Sinclair 1000

Due to space limitations, we can't always get to review every new game that comes out. We try to cover at least one game from all the major manufacturers, and any new games that have been anxiously awaited, such as M.U.L.E., River Raid/Kaboom, The Witness, *and* Major League Hockey. *If we didn't get to a game you've been waiting for, drop us a note and we'll try to fit it into the next issue. Here are just a few of the games we'll be looking at next time:* Orc Attack, *by Thorn EMI,* Murder on the Zinderneuf, *by Electronic Arts, one game from the Atari Program Exchange, and the newest ones from Adventure International, Sierra On-Line, Datamost, Epyx, and Creative Software.*

SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER!

The Latest In Educational Gaming

NUKE
PAC-
MAN

By Stick Masters

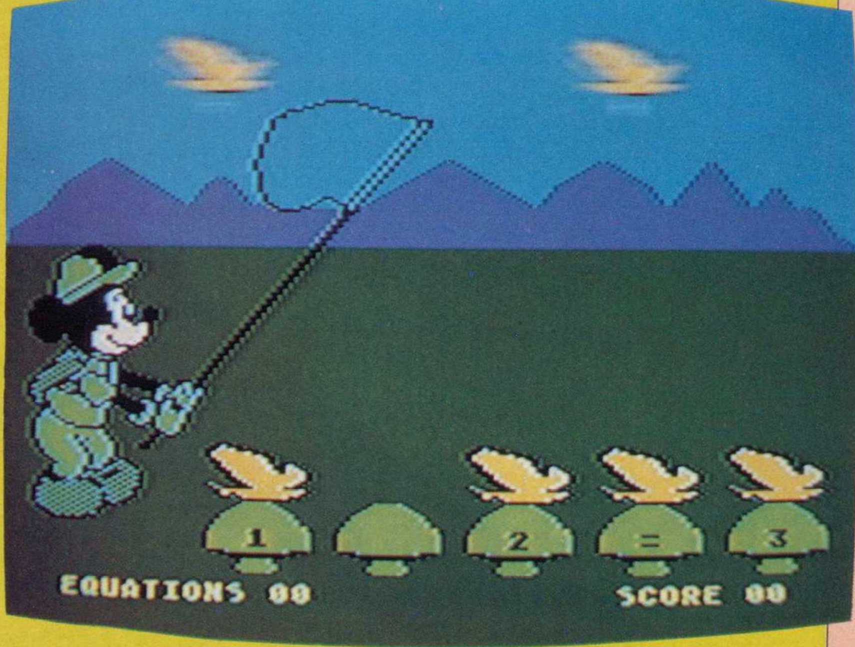
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN HOLMSTROM

You guys may not believe this, but I got this job 'cause I wrote a letter to *Computer Games* and asked why didn't they use kids to review the games, since kids are the ones who played them! They agreed, only they said I had to write about educational games. I almost threw up, but I said I'd play some of them and see what I thought. After playing a few, I found that some are okay, but not as good as my favorites like *Tron* or *Robotron*. The problem is you don't get to shoot things very often. Other than that, some of the games are not bad.

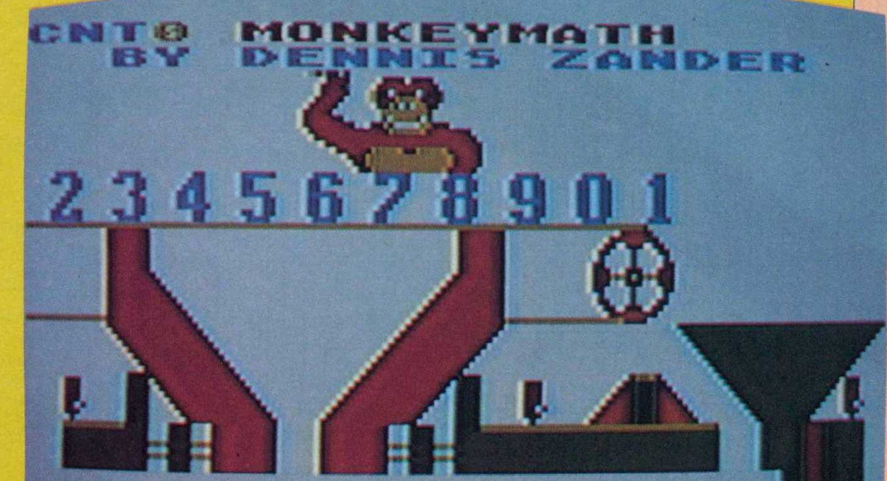
Monkeymath, by Artworx, was my favorite. You play a gorilla who smashes a number off a conveyor belt into a funnel. A joystick moves the gorilla back and forth, and the fire button moves his hand down to punch. The number falls into a mathematical formula, like 5+?=7. If the number solves it, you get 50 points. If it's wrong you gotta try again. The math problems are pretty simple—counting, addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. No problems use numbers with more than two digits. After you answer a certain number of questions you earn a bonus banana. The gorilla eats the banana after a game ends.

Even though I *hate* math, it was fun because you don't have to answer correctly. You could have a good time just smashing the numbers. There's some funny music and the colors and graphics are pretty good. I usually like games with monkeys, like *Congo Bongo* and *Donkey Kong*. So even though it would be better for kids in grade school (I'm in junior high, so I found it was too easy after a while), I give *Monkeymath* a good review. It's about as much fun as an educational game can get.

The other game I liked was **Mickey in the Great Outdoors** (Walt Disney Personal Computer Software), a four-parter. The worst thing about it was that it came on a tape cassette and took a *real* long time to load. So after you set up the computer and get ready to play, you've gotta sit there for ten minutes waiting for the game to come on. Once it got going, though, I liked it. It's recommended for kids seven to ten, so I'm a little bit old for it.



MICKEY IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS



MONKEYMATH

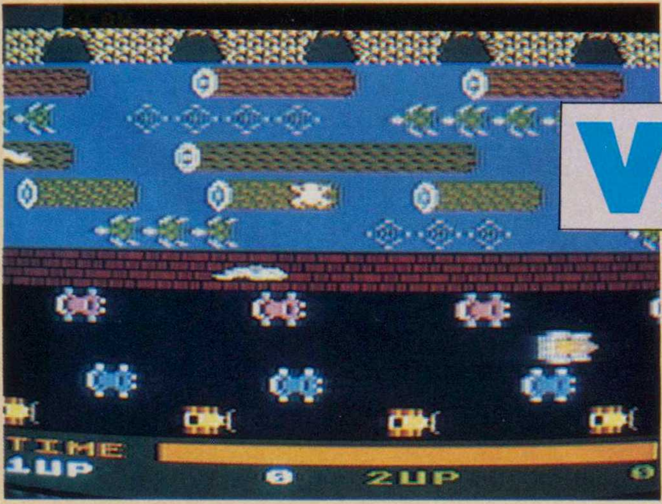
In the first part, *Mickey Goes Hiking*, Mickey Mouse shoots arrows into clouds to complete stepping-stone word sentences, which he walks over after they're completed correctly. Each cloud contains a different word, but only one of them will make sense in the sentence. In the second part, *Mickey Goes Hiking*, Mickey uses a wand to unscramble words. You use the joystick and fire button to move letters from flowers up to blank spaces

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

ONE ON ONE

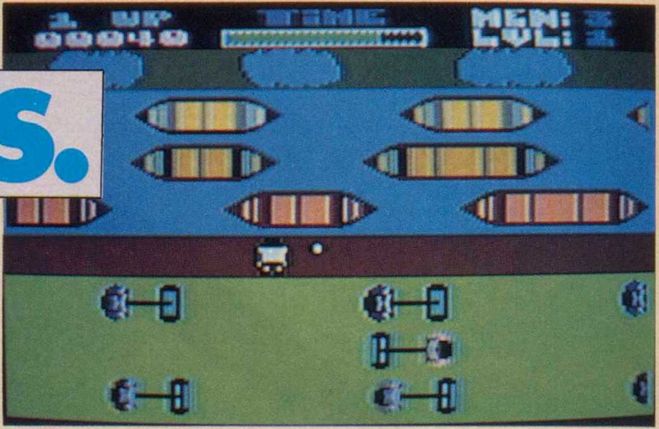
By Michael Blanchet

FROGGER (Parker, for Atari computers)



VS.

PREPPIE (Adventure International, for Atari computers)



THOUGH SOME OF YOU MAY DEBATE ME ON THIS POINT, *FROGGER* WAS the first "cross the road and then the river" video game. *Preppie* is a similar, a *very* similar, take-off on *Frogger*. If you only buy originals, *Frogger* is your pick. But both games have their advantages and disadvantages.

First, let's look at *Frogger*. Parker Brothers has done a commendable job of repackaging this coin-op hit into a computer cartridge (Sierra On-Line makes an excellent floppy disk version). The object is to guide a frog (that's you) across a busy highway, a median, and finally across a roaring river to one of the five homes running along the uppermost edge of the screen. Naturally, you move in hops. Each time the joystick is pushed in any direction your frog moves one leap in the corresponding heading. Both *Frogger* and *Preppie* are "play until you die" games. Eventually in each contest the tempo becomes so brisk that maneuvering about becomes too perilous for even the most fleet-footed of frogs.

Graphically, *Frogger* is as close to its coin-op counterpart as you're gonna get. Parker did, however, take liberties with the sound effects. In some cases they are exaggerated and in others they have been changed. If your frog stumbles off a log in the river, the resulting splash sounds more like a brick hitting the drink. When frog and auto meet head on, you are treated to a particularly violent "Powee!" And when you reach your home across the screen, that friendly "ribbit" from the coin-op is missing. Aside from a few licks here and there, the whimsical soundtrack of the original is missing. The game is mostly silent except for the whirring of the cars on the freeway.

Preppie, on the other hand, boasts a bouncy, multi-tune soundtrack. It is also the first video game parody and the first game based on a social group, if that should influence your choice. Here again, you have to move up the screen and avoid horizontally-moving objects. But now you are a short, squatty "prepster" on a golf course decked out in what appears to be a Lacoste shirt. The idea is to pick up golf balls that have strayed into the rough and carry them back to the bottom of the screen. A cute idea.

In *Preppie*, you must sidestep lawn mowers and bulldozers while crossing the fairway. To reach the far shore of the river you must hop from canoe to canoe, making sure that your topsiders land squarely in the center of each boat.

If one major difference does exist between the two games it would be the manner in which the character moves. In *Frogger* you can only hop, but in *Preppie* you can hop or sort of glide. Gliding is the easiest and safest method of moving, especially in the later stages of *Preppie*. Hopping takes a lot of practice, because there is a long delay between the time you give the command and when your prepster reacts.

Preppie treats the subject of death with a dash more humor than *Frogger*. While *Frogger* assaults you with splats and smooshes, *Preppie* utilizes some rather effective visuals when your boy falls prey to the whirring blades of the lawn mower. Instead of just dying, he flattens out like a pancake.

Both are very good, colorful games. Arcade afficionados and pure strategy fans may prefer the classic, *Frogger*. Those of you who want a fresh twist, give *Preppie* a chance. Adventure International also has a sequel to *Preppie*—*Preppie II*—which will be reviewed in our next issue.

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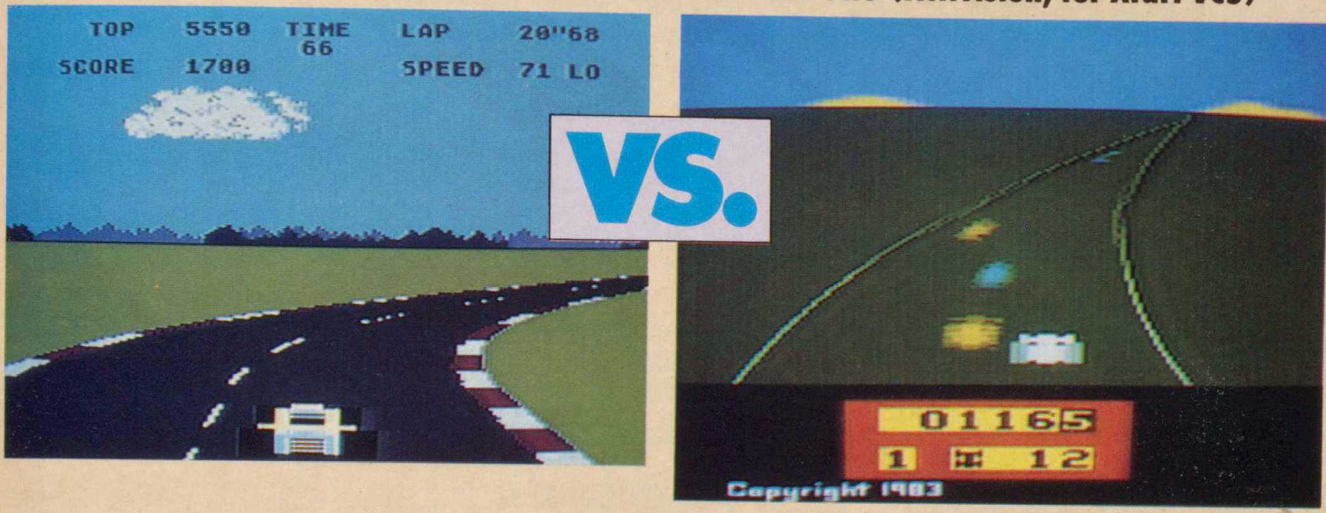
ONE ON ONE

POLE POSITION (Atari, for Atari VCS)

ENDURO (Activision, for Atari VCS)



I HATE DRIVING GAMES. I JUST BOUGHT A BRAND NEW SPORTS CAR, AND it's a lot more fun to drive than some blob on a TV screen. Recently, though, two driving games have surfaced that are standouts—*Pole Position* and *Enduro*. For VCS carts that fall into the same narrow category, they are miles apart.

If you are partial to arcade games, your first choice will be *Pole Position*. If you buy Atari's translation, you're getting a nifty collection of colorful first-person racing scenarios. This is definitely the better-looking game of the two. The *Pole Position* perspective is the most authentic graphic representation of racing ever executed. Instead of looking down on the course from overhead, you view the race from directly behind your car.

In comparison, *Enduro* is a dip in the otherwise high Activision graphic standards. It's attractive, but a lot cruder-looking that most Activision games. If games were judged solely on graphics, *Pole Position* would be the runaway winner in this race.

The object of *Pole Position* is to cover a preset course in the shortest possible time. Each game is divided into two almost identical contests. During the qualifying run you must cover the course within a set time limit. If you make it, you are assigned a position in the Gran Prix. Although the pole position offers little or no strategic edge, you receive the most bonus points if you capture this elusive inside slot.

The game is not as hard as the arcade game. Tricky turns are few and far between. Most of the time you can stay in the middle of the screen and be out of trouble. You *do* get the chance to pass other cars on the course, but there are not that many of them.

The play mechanics of the arcade game have survived the translation, but remember, now you have a joystick, not a steering wheel. To shift gears, you must depress the action button and push the stick forward. This business of shifting gears is fun and adds a touch of realism to the game. It can also be a pain in the butt. Since you also have to *steer* with the joystick, accidental downshifting can be a problem.

Enduro is a tougher game to beat. The name should give you an idea of the gist of this game—it's an endurance contest. During each game day you must pass a specified number of computer-controlled cars. As you drive, the day progresses from sunrise to sunset. Your instrument panel has an odometer, and the number of cars you pass is posted there.

To call this a tricky course would be an understatement. Unlike *Pole Position, Enduro's* road twists, bends, and turns. The transition between directions is remarkably smooth, too. The course doesn't just blink into a sharp turn.

Since you only need to adjust your lateral position on the course (you don't shift gears in this game), the less than agile Atari joystick does not hamper play action greatly. Steering response increases proportionally with your speed, so the car reacts beautifully to light taps on the stick.

Enduro gives you credit for being a good driver, but doesn't overpenalize you for being a little sloppy. The same can be said for *Pole Position*.

Pole Position is the better-looking game and *Enduro* is the better-playing game, which makes it a better game in my book. Atari fans should note, though, that the 5200 version of *Pole Position* is superb. It gives you a practice mode, more cars on the track, and four separate courses.

SCHOOL'S OUT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57

above. Once you unscramble the words, the flowers change colors, and the faster the word-puzzle is solved the more points you get. The other parts are called *Mickey Goes Exploring*. In the first one you catch butterflies that fly by at the top of the board. Each butterfly carries a number that can solve a mathematical equation, like in *Monkeymath*.

In the last part, which was my favorite, the mouse squashes a frog into a pond with a boat paddle. The frog jumps on numbered lily pads, and when Mickey hits the right one it completes an equation.

The graphics in all four parts are great. It's the only home game I've ever seen in which the cartoon character looks just like he does in the cartoons. The sound effects are also real good. I don't know how much you'd learn from playing it, but it's a lot of fun, so you can play it over and over again. I would have liked it better if they used Tron instead of Mickey Mouse but, like I said, this game's for younger kids than me.

They told me I could say whatever I want about these games, so I'm gonna say it. I thought **Spellicopter,** the "action spelling game" by Designware, was stupid and boring. I don't think the people who designed it ever played it or else they'd change it and make it better (which wouldn't be hard).

The game involves three screens. In the first one, you're shown a sentence that's missing one word, like, "I ________ run fast." (The missing word is *can*.) Then you maneuver the helicopter with the joystick to the next screen, where you have to fly past obstacles like blimps, clouds and mountains. The third screen has scrambled letters at the bottom. The player has to pick them up in the right order to spell a word correctly.

There are a total of 40 word lists of ten words each. They begin at basic and finish at advanced levels of spelling skills. You can also choose the difficulty of the helicopter course (pilot, captain or ace level). The scoring for an easy course is the same as it is in a more difficult level, so there's no point in choosing a difficult level unless you like to make things hard for yourself. The helicopter flies too slow and at the same pace at *any* difficulty level, which is a mistake. *Spellicopter* would have been a lot better if you could shoot at the UFOs and the obstacles, and if the obstacles floated around. Instead they just sit there and get in your way. The best thing about *Spellicopter* is that you can program your own word lists and sentence clues. This can be a lot of fun, especially when you make up insulting sentences about your teachers and enemies or use dirty words. Don't let your parents catch you doing this, though.

The last game I had to play was **Dragon's Keep,** a real strange adventure game from Sierra On-line. In *Dragon's Keep* you're supposed to find 16 hidden animals and free them. You go through different scenes, starting at a house and moving through a field, to a barn, a zoo, a bus station, a school and a few other places. Every time you enter a scene, you have to make a decision. For instance, the computer asks you if you want to go on the roof when you're in the boy's room. Naturally, the smart thing to do is look everywhere for the animals, so you go on the roof. When you see the squirrel up there, you push the buttons to set it free. But if you push the button to jump *off* the roof, the computer will ask you if you're crazy! Do you want to kill yourself? Well, no matter how much I tried, I couldn't jump off the roof in this crazy game. I wanted to see if the game ended when you killed yourself, like in other video games.

> **"After you answer a certain number of questions, you earn a bonus banana."**

There's a map that goes along with the game so you don't get too lost while you move from scene to scene. The animals aren't difficult to find or to set free, but you have to visit almost every screen in the game to find all of them.

The game's graphics are a little weird. It's a nice effect the way they fill the screen, but the animals look diseased sometimes and a lot of the scenes aren't that interesting to look at. Actually, the best part of the game is in the introduction, when the game play is explained.

Dragon's Keep is a strange game, but there's no use in playing it more than once if you know where all the animals are. There's also a lack of action. There's not much to do but answer questions by pushing a couple of buttons. It's different, though, so there's something to be said for it. If only you could program it to hide the animals in different places after a game is over, it would have been a lot better.

All in all, these educational games were pretty good. Of course, I'd rather blow stuff up, but it doesn't hurt to learn stuff once in a while.

Artworx Software, 150 North Main St., Fairport, New York 14450.

Walt Disney Personal Computer Software

Software Sierra On-Line, Building 209, Coarsegold, CA 93614

DesignWare, 185 Berry St., San Francisco, CA 94107

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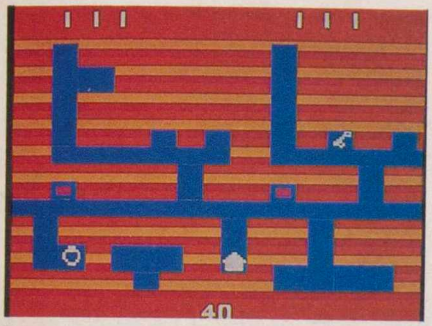
VIDEO GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

By Raymond Dimetrosky

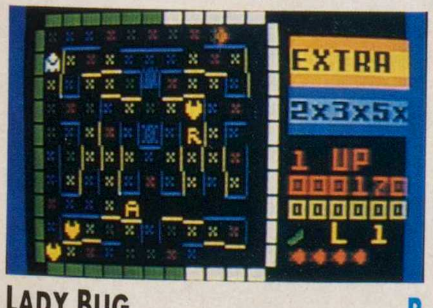


TUTANKHAM A-

You are an archeologist trying to recover treasure hidden in King Tut's tomb. There are countless supernatural creatures guarding the prizes. You can kill them or avoid them. There are four chambers and you must find the key hidden within each chamber.

Tutankham is an excellent adaptation of the arcade game. For the VCS, the graphics and sound are good, though nothing like the original. If you're into maze games, you'll love it. After you complete the first maze, there's lots of action in the remaining three. And this isn't slow-moving like a lot of maze games. What makes *Tut* so much fun is the variety of prizes to collect (25) and creatures to kill (8). Everything is worth a different number of points, so you must make the decision whether to try for more treasures and risk death or beat it out of there. It's hours of fun.

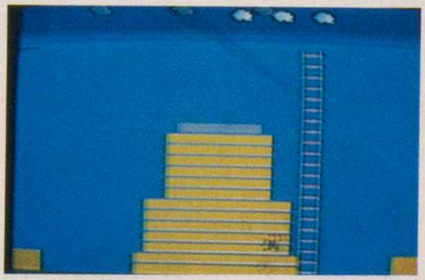
Parker Brothers, for Atari VCS



LADY BUG B

This is a simplified version of the arcade classic, which maintains much of the flavor of the original. As in the ColecoVision adaptation, your goal is to guide your ladybug through a maze of swinging doors, devour flowers, hearts, and letters, and avoid skulls and enemy insects. You earn bonus points by spelling the word "EXTRA," but unlike the ColecoVision version, you cannot spell "SPECIAL" for an added bonus. As a result, the game seems to be much more simplistic than its ColecoVision cousin. The graphics are also lacking—the predatory bugs look like a bunch of match sticks. But the sound effects are virtually identical to ColecoVision's, and, most important, the game's a lot of fun. Once you begin to play you quickly forget what this version doesn't have. And since there are still a limited number of arcade hits available for Intellivision, *Lady Bug* will be enjoyed by many, especially lovers of maze games.

Coleco, for Intellivision

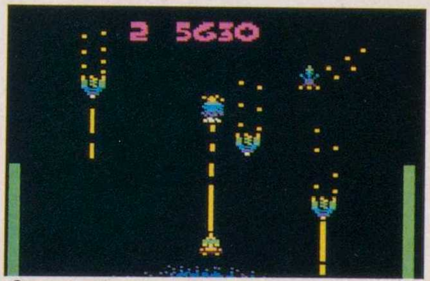


MASTER BUILDER B

You're an architect who must create a building from memory. To achieve this feat, you lay bricks in their appropriate positions while avoiding such obstacles as a rotten kid, "spectradog," and lightning. When you have correctly created your masterpiece, you climb up a ladder and travel by helicopter to the next site to begin a second construction job.

Master Builder is one of those games you'll either love or hate. Unlike most contests, this game tests your memory rather than your reflexes. A great deal of patience is required here since trial and error is the best way to achieve success. To the game's credit you get the chance to build five different buildings instead of repeatedly working on one or two structures. And there are some great effects—if you are standing on the ladder when the kid arrives, he pulls it out from under you. So if you enjoy games that require you to think, you're in luck. But don't expect a lot of action.

Spectravideo, for Atari VCS



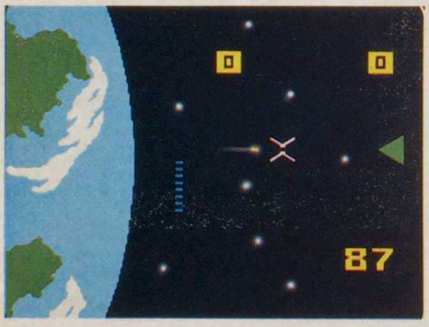
SOLAR STORM B

Your planet is being showered by debris and it's your job to shoot and destroy the attackers. Six different types of objects are falling from the sky. While some shoot at you, others cause your planet to heat up. If you are hit four times, or if your planet reaches a high temperature . . . bye-bye.

Solar Storm is a shoot-'em-up with a couple of twists. For one thing, you use a paddle instead of a joystick. As a result, you have incredibly fine control and you can quickly move your ship across the screen. After you reach 500 points and successfully complete a wave, you are rewarded with a completely different screen. The game play of *Solar Storm* still remains similar to a number of shoot-'em-up games. Once again you roam across the bottom of the screen shooting upward, as in *Demon Attack* or

Space Invaders. But by adding some novel twists, such as the heat bars which change colors to reflect the warmth of your planet's surface, the designers have made this contest seem fresh and original.

Imagic, for Atari VCS

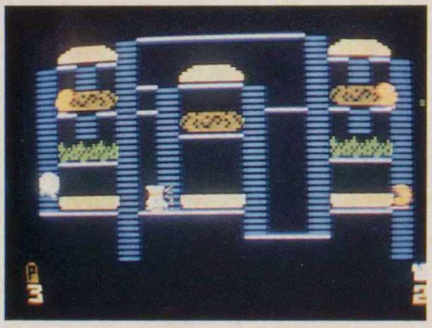


THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR A

The Dreadnaughts are extremely large warships that are attacking the planet Zorbax. They're so big they can't even fit on the TV screen. You, on the other hand, are rather small, but you have ten ships in your fleet that can really speed around. Your arsenal includes missiles and bombs, as in *Xevious*. To achieve victory you must hit numerous targets on the Dreadnaught before it reaches Zorbax.

The Dreadnaught Factor is an outstanding space game with many unusual and terrific features. Certain targets can only be destroyed by missiles, while others can only be eliminated by bombs. The graphics are out of this world. You're treated to a view of Zorax, then outer space and finally the Dreadnaught ship. In later rounds you must defeat more than one Dreadnaught and, surprise, they're not the same! This is one of those games that offers you the fun of discovery as you improve your ability. *The Dreadnaught Factor* might also be the first video game that you'll *never* master. There are seven levels, and the final challenge, which features 100 Dreadnaughts, is labelled "Impossible." *The Dreadnaught Factor* will be loved by gamers who thrive on never-ending space shoot-outs. So far, there have not been that many superior games of this sort for the Intellivision, so people who own that system should definitely pick this one up.

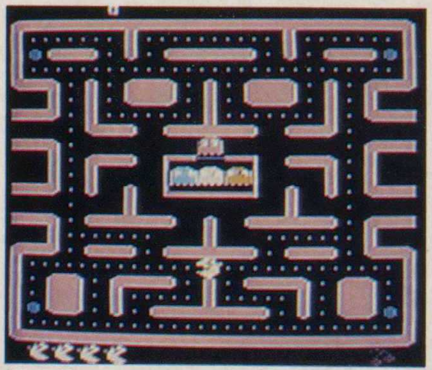
Activision, for Intellivision



BURGERTIME A

In *BurgerTime* you are a chef who must build hamburgers while squashing "nasties." This is a ladder game, but unlike *Donkey Kong*, your goal is not to reach the top, but to drop the burgers below. You are equipped with four pinches of pepper to stun the enemy, and if you're lucky enough to gobble ice cream, coffee, ketchup, or fries, you earn extra dashes of pepper. All of the charm of the arcade hit has been captured here. The nasties, hot dogs, eggs, and pickles are the most delightful creatures to ever attack an arcader. And if it's a challenge that you want, you won't be disappointed. There are seven different mazes and it's possible to score up to 255,999,950 points! *BurgerTime* is not one of the most complex video games, but it *is* incredibly addicting. It's an excellent addition to the Intellivision library, and Mattel was very smart to license it.

Mattel, for Intellivision

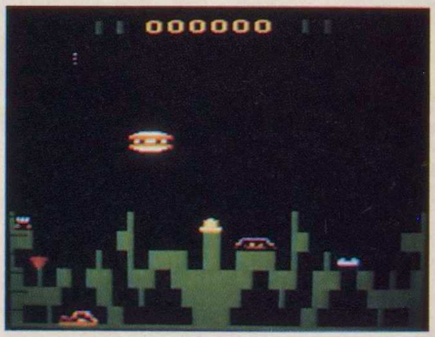


MS. PAC MAN A-

In many respects the 5200 edition of *Ms. Pac Man* is a faithful adaptation of the arcade hit. As in the original, there are the great "half time" shows between rounds. The graphics approach arcade quality here, with multiple mazes. The sound effects feature the same great theme songs from the arcade game. Other sound effects, particularly Ms. Pac Man's chomping, sound rather peculiar. This is only a minor difference though, and visually the 5200 game is pretty darn good.

Most things in this world are not perfect. There is a major drawback here, and since the game strongly resembles the arcade hit, that problem stands out. The 5200 controls are just not able to meet the demands of the tougher rounds of *Ms. Pac Man*. It is simply too hard to turn corners. If you've become an expert with the 5200's joystick and you are a *Ms. Pac Man* fan (who isn't?), then this is the game you've been waiting for. But the rest of us, who can't quite move around with the 5200 controls, will just have to keep praying that Atari will introduce a better joystick.

Atari, for Atari 5200

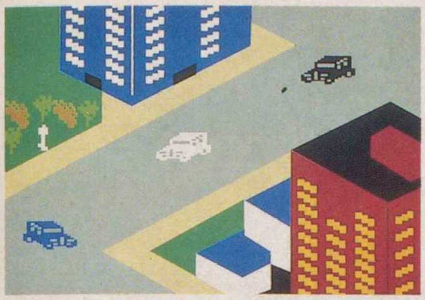


Z-TACK D+

In *Z-Tack* you control a ship (it looks like a Big Mac) and you must destroy enemy bases that are firing at you. There are six waves, but they are virtually identical. Beginning in wave three, some of the enemy missiles turn into deadly balls, which change into rockets. The rockets shoot across the screen, but relax—they don't really come after you.

If this sounds familiar, it's not surprising. There are probably 300 similar space shoot-'em-ups available for the VCS. But this one is in a class by itself—it's the most boring space game in history. *Z-Tack* (made by a Japanese company) might have been acceptable in the early years of the VCS. But now it's old news. There is nothing to this game. At least if there had been creative sound effects and colorful graphics, *Z-Tack* might have been saved. But they're awful, too! In fact, the sounds are so annoying that you may feel like throwing a brick through your screen.

Bomb, for Atari VCS

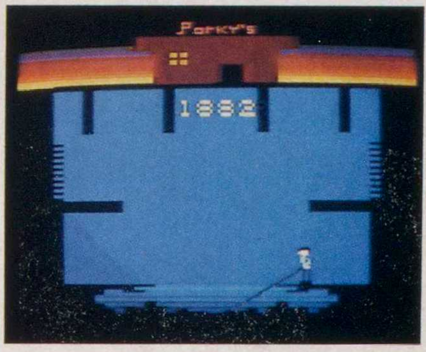


SAFECRACKER A

Imagine this—you're a spy in a foreign country in search of the enemy's secrets. You jump in your car and soar down the street looking for the embassy. Once you reach it, you enter the building and unlock or blow up the safe to find the secret combinations of the country's treasury vault. But look out. The secret police are shooting at you.

Safecracker is another sensational Imagic game for Intellivision. Like *Truckin'*, this is not a game that you will quickly master. What makes *Safecracker* so outstanding is that it is a racing game, a shooting contest, and a game of strategy all rolled into one. The graphics are stupendous. You drive past colorful buildings with smoking chimneys. Every street looks different from the one you've just been on. The sound effects are just as good, especially the police sirens. Some gamers may not like the fact that they'll have to play around with *Safecracker* for a while before they get the hang of it. But if you own an Intellivision, you're used to that.

Imagic, for Intellivision



PORKY'S B-

Lately, if a movie is a hit, you can bet it will turn up as a video game. That seems logical with space films like *Star Wars* or action films like the James Bond movies, but *PORKY'S?!?* Well, to the designers' credit, they have managed to capture the spirit of the film, but as has been the case with other movie translations, some gamers may not care for the play action.

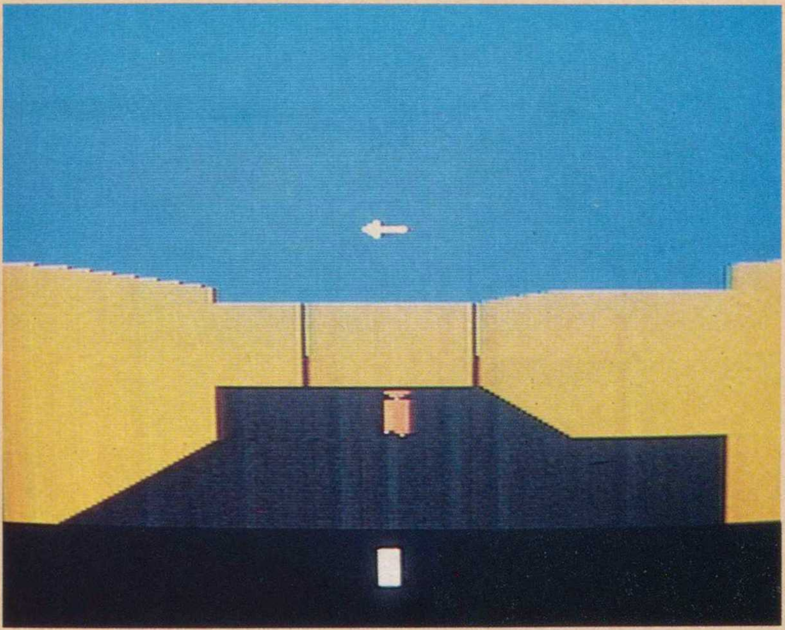
You control Pee Wee. The task is to blow up Porky's bar. You must travel across a highway to the bar. Since it's nearly impossible to make it across, you'll probably find yourself in the swamp. You have to build a ladder and climb into the gym, where Wendy is showering. If you reach the top of the shower, you will stop one lane of traffic on the highway. Do this enough times and the traffic stops so you can reach the bar. Then you have to find the correct path, plant dynamite, and blow it up.

Porky's is an adventure like Atari's *Superman*. Any game with this many screens is not going to be boring, and you're not going to master it in two days. Even after you learn how to blow up Porky's bar, you can still play for points and make the action more difficult.

The game requires a great deal of time and patience. Some gamers will become frustrated by the frequent returns to the swamp. But if you thrive on adventures that require you to do more than just shoot demons, you'll probably enjoy *Porky's*. We have been making fun of the *idea* of this game for a long time and we have to admit that Fox did a pretty good job with it. An unexpected surprise.

Fox Video Games, for Atari VCS

VIDEO GAME OF THE MONTH

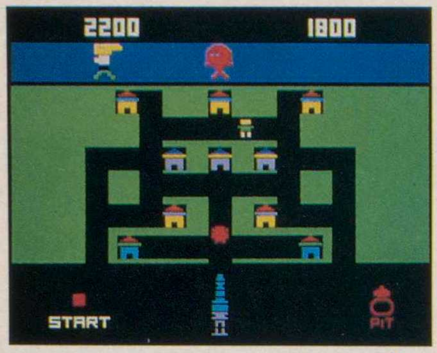


LONDON BLITZ A

If your Atari VCS is sitting in a closet gathering dust simply because every new game seems like a carbon copy of what you've seen before, then rejoice. Avalon Hill has entered the VCS video game market, and judging by the first release, *London Blitz*, they're determined to create contests that are novel and exciting. In *London Blitz* it is your job to defuse bombs that are ticking away. First you examine a street map to determine their location. After you plan your route to the bomb, you hit the red button and a close-up view of the street appears. When you reach the bomb, the real fun begins. You have a limited amount of time to defuse the bomb by selecting the hidden three-number combination. Since there are three different types of bombs and different methods required to disarm each one, you must continually be on your toes.

London Blitz is great fun. It's one of the few VCS games with three different screens, two of which are scrolling. This game is more than a test of your reflexes. You are required to make quick decisions. The game is colorful, has good graphics, and allows you to choose between seven starting levels. *London Blitz* is no bomb—it's thrilling.

Avalon Hill, for Atari VCS

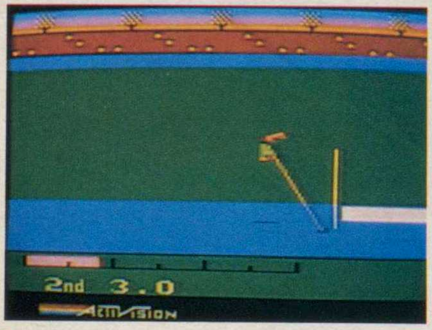


BLUEPRINT **B+**

Some video games require strategy, and others demand quick reflexes. *Blueprint* is one of the few which primarily calls for a good memory. You are Blueprint. Daisy, your girlfriend, is being pursued by Ollie Ogre. To destroy Ollie you shoot him with your "contraption." Only one problem. Ollie has scattered the parts of your contraption into the ten houses that lie in front of you. You retrieve the parts and rebuild it in the correct order. Don't worry, you're given some help. At the beginning of each round you see the parts disappearing into the houses. A good memory is essential. If you go into a house without a part, you'll be greeted by a bomb instead. Time is of the essence, since Ollie is gaining on Daisy.

Blueprint will appeal to the gamer who wants more than just a shoot-'em-up contest, but who also wishes to avoid a lengthy game of strategy. You can play *Blueprint* without reading a complex manual, yet there are enough twists to keep you interested. Besides all the other obstacles, you're chased by Fuzzy Wuzzy, and your energy is limited. Add some colorful graphics and a cute musical there, and you end up with an above average game.

CBS Electronics, for Atari VCS

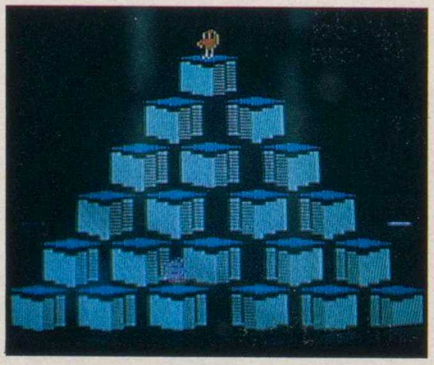


DECATHLON **B**

If you want to see how far video games have come in the last few years, compare Atari's old *Video Olympics* to *Decathlon*, David Crane's first game since *Pitfall*. While *Video Olympics* featured a number of slight variations on *Pong*, *Decathlon* consists of ten separate events, ranging from the 100-meter dash to the pole vault—the ten events in the modern decathlon.

The action begins with a melodic rendition of the Olympic theme, as your athlete runs with the Olympic torch. The graphics feature a colorful scrolling field with viewers' stands in the distance. Like the real decathlon, Activision's is a grueling experience. To make your athlete run, you must *fiercely* jiggle the joystick back and forth. While some gamers may enjoy this unique touch, others may find the experience to be more exhausting than fun. To pack all ten events in this cartridge, Crane was forced to make his figures tiny and stick-like. *Decathlon* does have one thing in its favor: up to four people can play in the same game by taking turns with the joystick. But you'd better be ready to work for your points. This one's a real joystick buster.

Activision, for Atari VCS



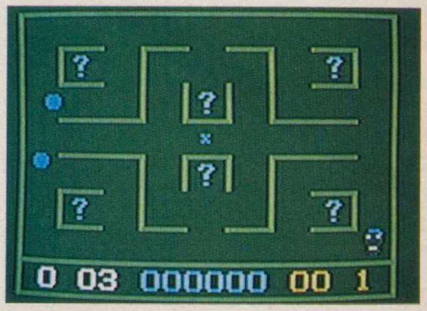
Q*BERT **B**

This will be one of those cartridges that friends will argue about. Some gamers will be pleased that the essential elements of the arcade hit remain. Others will answer back that the game is a shell of their beloved coin-op. The main question here, though, should be, "Is the home game fun?" The answer is easy—yes.

Don't expect arcade quality *Q*Bert*. Here we have 21 cubes, not 28. Q*Bert doesn't curse, he squeaks like a door. He and his adversaries are ghostlike and hard to follow. The pyramid itself is fat and blocky—the VCS never did draw diagonal lines well.

However, you must take the limitations of the Atari VCS into account. To take a complicated game like *Q*Bert* and squeeze it into the VCS is a Herculean task. The results may not be faithful in looks, but they *are* faithful in spirit. Like the arcade game, home *Q*Bert* is easy to learn, funny, and fun. If we had not seen the arcade game first, this *Q*Bert* cart would be considered a terrific original game. As original arcade games get more and more graphically complex, the VCS translations are going to *appear* less and less polished. VCS owners must accept this or upgrade.

Parker Brothers, for Atari VCS



TURTLES **B-**

In case you missed the arcade game, *Turtles* is a maze game in which you have to pick up your "baby turtlets" and bring them home. Beetles are chasing you, and you can avoid them or drop "bug bombs" on them. This is Odyssey's first arcade license, and they have turned out a game that is basic, simple to learn, somewhat addicting, and surprisingly challenging. The screen displays the game's high score and may be the first to advertise the company's other games right on the screen—PLAY KILLER BEES. Turtles displays a bright green screen, and the turtles and beetles look reasonably realistic. You can carry up to 99 bug bombs at one time, and you get them by running over an X in the middle of the screen. Interestingly, the sound is a lot better if you take *off* the Odyssey speech synthesizer. The beetles get smarter as you move through the levels. It's no *Pac-Man*, but aren't you a little tired of *Pac-Man* anyway?

Odyssey, for Odyssey^2

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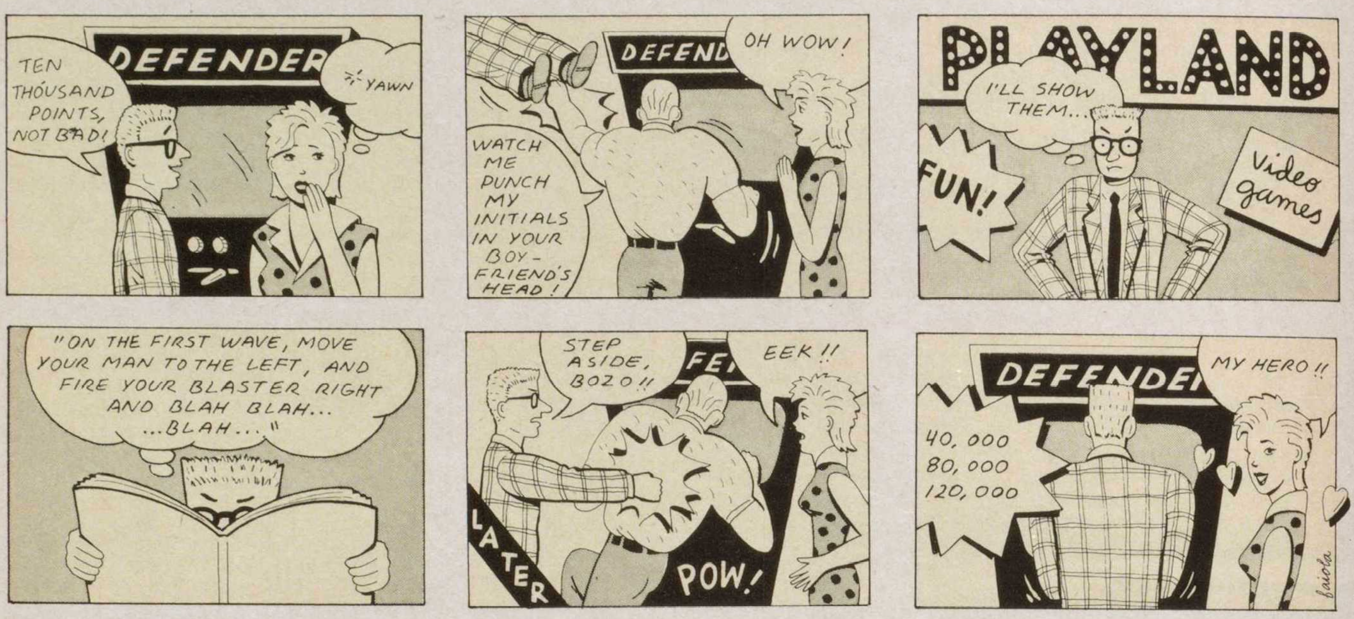
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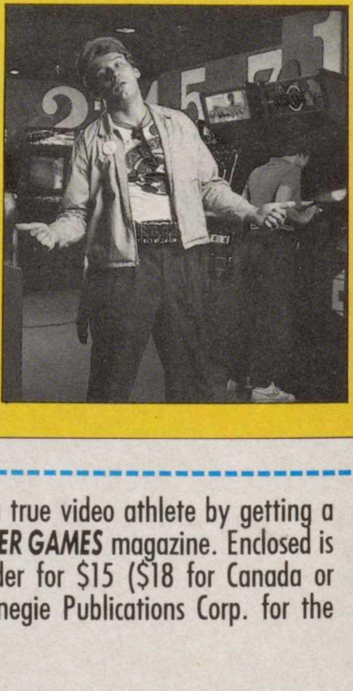

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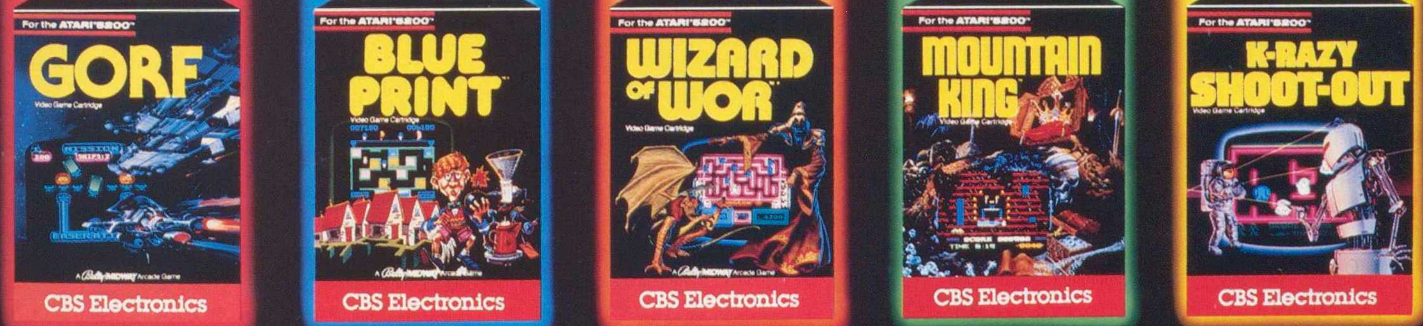
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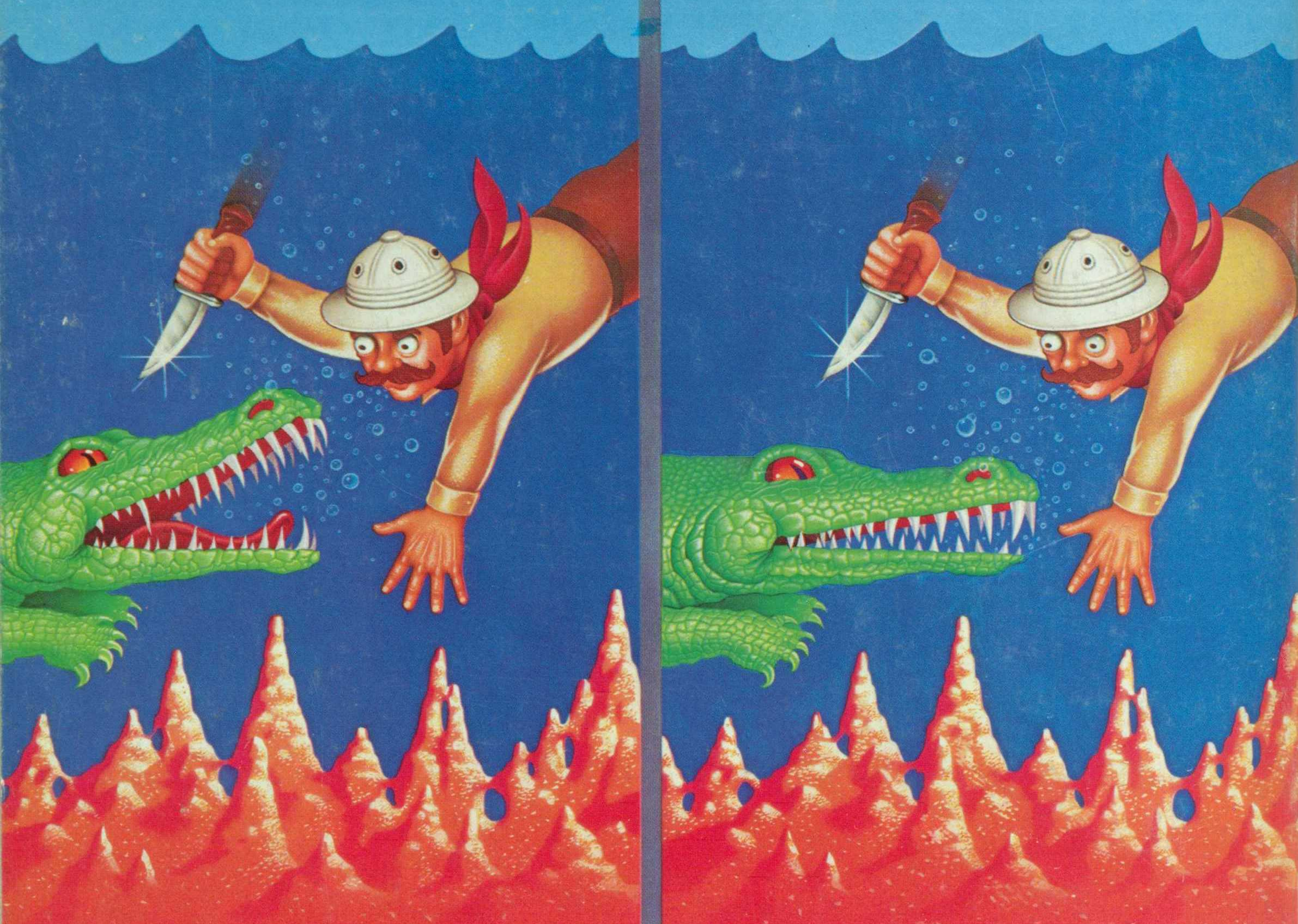

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